AIRBOY™

#57

FROM EVANGELINE TO CONAN — A CHAT WITH
CHUCK DIXON

DEAD MEN DO TELL TALES!
HECTOR COLLAZO

LIFE AFTER DEATH — AT MARVEL
FROM H. P. LOVECRAFT TO ELFQUEST GAMING
GREG STAFFORD

DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT'S

COMICS INTERVIEW

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CONTENTS

EDITORIAL:
UP FRONT
a rap with *dak*
3

WRITER:
CHUCK DIXON
what do *evangeline, conan & airboy* have in common? *lou mougin* gets the lowdown
5

ARTIST:
JERRY ROBINSON
part two of a gab about the golden age with *steve ringgenberg*
17

PRODUCTION:
HECTOR COLLAZO
our first interview with a dead man deep inside marvel — a *dwight jon zimmerman* exclusive!
34

GAMING:
GREG STAFFORD
the chaosium kingpin on the behind-the-scenes nitty-gritty of gaming
44

LETTERS:
LAST WORD
this just in from japan...
63

Art: Jim Salicrup

UP FRONT

Back when **Steve Gerber** wrote MAN-THING for Marvel, a small Florida village called Citrusville was the nexus — of practically everything. In real life, however, the nexus is a small Georgia village called Clayton.

How do I know? I spend a lot of time there — on Screamer Mountian.

I came to the area to take over the editing of a magazine, following in the footsteps of **Don Pendleton**, then unknown but now practically a brand name in men's adventure books through the creation of his character, The Executioner.

Since then, I, too, have gone to other things — editing and scripting comics for Marvel, DC and others, writing paperbacks, and TV scripts and, of course, publishing — but I always return to the nexus.

It was in out-of-the-way, off-the-beaten-track Clayton that I met actor (and comics fan) **David Carradine** — and learned that one of his favorite comic characters is a creation of mine: Lunatik, from the pages of THE DEFENDERS. He was filming THE LONG RIDERS here. Turns out a fair number of movies have been shot in Clayton — DELIVERANCE, THE GREAT LOCOMOTIVE CHASE, GRIZZLY, etc.

Actor **Burt Reynolds** owns a place up the road. Science fiction and fantasy artists **Ron** and **Val Lakey Lindahn** live only miles away. The Cabbage Patch Kids king **Xavier Roberts**, houses operations a short drive away — and a slightly further drive brings you to adventure writers **Jerry** and **Sharon Ahern** or, in a different direction, celebrated SF author **Sharon Webb.**

But perhaps the bigger surprise of late — as we were about to go to press with this issue — was the discovery that world traveller and comics alumnus **Dan Barry**(who has produced the FLASH GORDON syndicated strip longer than most of us have lived) is now settled only 20 miles away. Dan drew the very earliest original adventure of AIRBOY.

Coincidence? No. Clayton really *is* the nexus — not Citrusville.

-Dwight

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"EVANGELINE was my first series."

CHUCK DIXON

A moment of your time out there, folks. Give me your attention. Now, then — how many of you read something Chuck Dixon writes? Hey, that's some *show of hands out there! You, sir, what are you into? AIRBOY, VALKYRIE, and the related titles? And you, sir, with the "Mom" tattoo on your chest — ah, we've got a CONAN man with us today! And you, miss — what's that? EVANGELINE? That's the ticket!*

Well, Chuck Dixon writes all these titles, and more besides. He writes and writes and writes, several books per month, and shows no sign of stopping yet. He's one of the winds in 4Winds and produces regularly for Marvel, Eclipse, and First comics. Quality stuff, too.

Mostly, Chuck is responsible for one of the more successful titles of the late eighties, and one of the most successful Forties-hero revivals ever — the new AIRBOY, from Eclipse. Many resurrected Golden Agers creak with the nostalgia and baggage of an older, half-remembered time. AIRBOY does not, for the most part, and places itself squarely and successfully in the real-world present, with a costumed kid, a Japanese air ace from World War II, a reformed lady Nazi superpilot, a monstrous walking hunk of vegetation, and a robot with a human brain, among others, all pitted against evil and injustice no matter who backs it, independent crook or government.

In this I have had some small part. When I heard from Cat Yronwode and Dean Mullaney at Eclipse about their revival of the AIRBOY series, I wound up with the assignment of writing two articles to introduce newer readers to the Airboy That Was in the Forties. When I ran across Chuck Dixon himself at the Chicago Comicon that year, he shook my hand in appreciation for the articles. That began an acquaintanceship of some duration, and, recently, I phoned up Chuck for an interview. And this is how it ran . . .

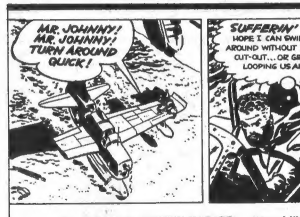
LOU MOUGIN: *Let's get something about the origin of Chuck Dixon here, how did you become interested in comics?*

CHUCK DIXON: It all started when a lightning bolt hit a vat full of chemicals — *(Laughter.)* I don't know, I've always been interested in comics. I think my background about why I'm interested in comics and how I got involved in them is almost identical to everyone else's who's working in comics, so it's pointless to even go into. I liked them as a child and always thought I'd like to write them, and I drew them on looseleaf paper when I was in elementary school, yadadadadadadadah.

LOU: *But where did you come into it? What comics were you into when you were a kid?*

CHUCK: Well, basically it was the beginning of the Marvel Age with FANTASTIC FOUR and SPIDER-MAN. Then I grew up to appreciate the early Warren magazines. From there I . . . well, I took an anti-Marvel stand when **Steve Ditko** left SPIDER-MAN; I felt that it was Marvel's fault so I didn't buy any Marvel comics for about five years.

"I did a lot of Winnie the Pooh word


MR. JOHNNY!
MR. JOHNNY! TURNIN' AROUND QUICK!
SUFFERIN' SUSIE!
HOPE I CAN SWING HER AROUND WITHOUT DUNKING CUT-OUT... OR GROUND LOOPING US ALL.

Frank Robbin's JOHNNY HAZARD — "paced like a bullet."

LOU: *Hm! That's interesting.*

CHUCK: At this time there was no fandom, or for me there was no fandom, but I thought I had to take a stand.

LOU: *What comics and writers have influenced you the most?*

CHUCK: Well, **Stan Lee** has always influenced me on dialogue, he kept it concise and to the point. **Milton Caniff** in more recent years has been a big influence, mostly in dialogue and pacing. **Frank Robbins** also, the JOHNNY HAZARD stuff, that stuff's paced like a bullet. Another major influence, just in terms of I think he's becoming a better writer as the years go on, and also from the person, is **Timothy Truman.** He's the guy that kept me in there pushing, to keep submitting. And . . . I don't know. I like a lot of the guys writing now. I really like **Mike Baron's** writing. I have a feeling that he approaches the material in somewhat the same way I do. I like his stuff, it's good comics, entertaining, fast-paced.

LOU: *Yes, it is good stuff. Alan Moore maybe?*

CHUCK: **Alan Moore** probably less. I mean he's got his bright spots and I think some of the stuff he writes is terrific, that ACTION ANNUAL in particular was one of the best comics stories I've ever read. I like **Larry Hama's** writing. I don't know, there's a whole lot of guys.

LOU: *How did you get started in actually professionally doing comics? What was your first strip and who did you work for and so on?*

CHUCK: Well, I worked on a lot of fanzines, like around '71 and '72, in Chicago; they liked my work and they accepted it. And from there I did . . . well, I couldn't get into comics because at that time it was a very bad time, DC was having their implosion and sent 40% of their staff out to the sidewalk — comics were just basically looking at the end of the road there. So I got work in children's books and I wrote a few of them —

LOU: *What were some of the books you wrote?*

CHUCK: Well, I worked under pseudonyms, but I did a lot of Winnie the Pooh word books under the name of **Walt Disney** — you might have heard of him — and I wrote a Raggedy Ann and Andy book under the name **Mary Fulton.** I guess my name just doesn't lend itself to children's books, so I can sympathize with Jon Sable. *(Laughter.)* Yeah, it was the first person ever to put a gunfight into a Winnie the Pooh book.

LOU: *Oh my gosh!*

CHUCK: It was in TRAVELS WITH POOH. Tigger's grandfather ended up in a Western gunfight: *(Laughter.)* And then from there my first comic work was with a very small-time low-budget lowbrow outfit called Countrywide. They did an odious book called GASM which I was on for three issues.

LOU: *I didn't know GASM lasted three issues.*

CHUCK: It ran for about eight actually, but I was only on it for three. They went to **Corben** reprints towards the end. It was an experience, like working for one of those slave shops of the '40s. That chased me away from comics for a good long while. *(Laughter.)* I came back just recently, really. It's only been in the last few years I've been working in comics.

LOU: *And it's been staggering the amount of stuff you've put out in those few years: EVANGELINE; all of the AIRBOY stuff; SAVAGE SWORD. I took a look at a SAVAGE SWORD a few months ago just to see who was doing it, and it was like, "Chuck Dixon? He's doing this, too?" How did you get into doing SAVAGE SWORD?*

CHUCK: I was talking to **Hilary Barta,** a real great guy, and he told me that **Larry Hama** had this book I just *had* to get on; and when I'd heard about it I knew he was right, I just *had* to get on it — it was SAVAGE TALES, the second incarnation of that, which THE 'NAM came out of. So I called **Larry Hama** and told him I *had* to get on the book, and he just wondered who this jerk was that was calling him. *(Laughter.)* But I sent him some of my stuff and he liked it. And it really was the kind of stuff I wanted to write, historical fiction and Westerns and tough guy stuff. So I got on the book, and after awhile I had survived Larry's test of fire and he put me on KULL THE CONQUEROR, the backup of SAVAGE SWORD, and after about a year he asked me if I'd like to write the lead, which I *jumped* at.

I enjoy the Conan stuff. The biggest thing for me is working with **Gary Kwapisz** because we've developed a really good professional relationship and he's a *lot* of fun to work with. And he's got a real handle on Conan, which is a harder character to get a handle on then you might realize. You know, you *have* to keep it interesting, and Gary puts in all of the humorous things that really carry the book over. I would encourage anybody who hasn't taken a look at SAVAGE SWORD recently to take a look at it, because we're having fun so maybe you'll get a kick out of reading it.

LOU: *I've read very few CONANs since Roy Thomas left, but I did enjoy the ones that I've read by you.*

CHUCK: Well, thank you. That's the way it goes; first people are surprised that I write

© 1948 King Features Syndicate, Inc.

books under the name of Walt Disney."

YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO SEE YOUR TARGETS, BUT YOU CAN HEAR THEM...
WHEN I SOUND THE BELLS YOU LOOSE YOUR ARROWS AT THE SOUND. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
AYE, CIMMERIAN. RING AWAY.
RING
CROM'S BLOOD!
WE WILL BEGIN AGAIN...

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THE SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN. Story by Chuck, Breakdowns by Gary Kwapisz, Finishes by Ernie Chan. These guys obviously had fun with this tale of handicapped warriers.

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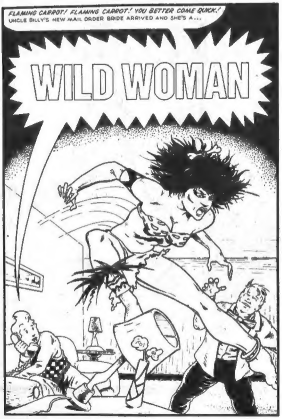

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"How did you get the idea for a nun hit person?"

it, and then they say they haven't looked at it in years. *(Laughter.)*

LOU: *Okay, everybody go out there and look at SAVAGE SWORD! Was EVANGELINE your first regular strip or what, and how did it come about?*

CHUCK: It was three issues in three years, it wasn't really regular. *(Laughter.)* But yeah, it was the first series I tackled. I wrote a lot of them in a short time, but they have appeared over a very long time.

LOU: *How did you get the idea for EVANGELINE, the idea for the nun hit person avenger warrior? It reminded me, actually, of a paperback series during the '70s called THE INQUISITOR.*

CHUCK: Which was written by the fellow that did GORKY PARK, **Martin Cruz Smith,** under the name **Simon Quinn.** Yeah, among that genre THE INQUISITOR was certainly one of the best written, and it was sort of an inspiration, although the character in THE INQUISITOR was by no means a member of the church, he was pretty much a hedonist. *(Laughter.)* That was sort of like a springboard for it. I came up with the idea to present it to HEAVY METAL when they first started accepting American work, and of course that never went anywhere. Then I like kicked the character around in my head for a long time, and then when Comico started up within an hour's driving distance from my house, I just figured I'd take a shot. And they liked the book and the rest is history.

LOU: *Yeah, and it's being published by First right now.*

CHUCK: It should go monthly within the next year.

LOU: *Hey, that's great.*

CHUCK: It's selling very well and they're happy with it.

LOU: *Well, Chuck — speaking of great sales — how does it feel to have Eclipse's second biggest seller right off the bat with AIRBOY, and have it burgeoning into a plethora of spin-off titles as well?*

CHUCK: Well, I'm not real aware of the sales figures. I know that it's consistently one of Eclipse's best sellers because they continuously ask for more AIRBOY material. *(Laughter.)* And they seem to have made it their company's flagship character.

LOU: *Yeah, that's true.*

CHUCK: And I'm pretty pleased about it, you know, because I *loved* the character for years. I was glad to get the opportunity to do it, and I'm even more pleased that it's popular.

LOU: *So you read AIRBOY before you even got the series, right?*

CHUCK: Yeah. One of the first conventions I ever went to, years and years ago, I picked up a cheesy Xerox reprint of AIR FIGHTERS #2 and so I was introduced to all of those characters then.

LOU: *AIR FIGHTERS #2 would be the first Airboy issue, right?*

CHUCK: Yeah, the first Airboy, the first Skywolf, the first Bald Eagle — the whole gang was there with their first adventures.

LOU: *Right, because AIR FIGHTERS #1 was the one with the Black Commander and the other nonentities.*

CHUCK: AIR FIGHTERS #1 was before **Charles Biro** came along.

LOU: *That was the one that stalled in the hanger, so to speak.* (Laughter.) *Okay, so you had a chance to read the old AIR FIGHTERS — I suppose you read about them in Steranko's HISTORY OF COMICS?*

CHUCK: Yeah, **Steranko** was the big introduction, plus when I first started going to conventions and buying a lot of old comics, the AIR FIGHTERS and the old AIRBOYs were pretty cheap, so I picked up quite a few of them. So I was real familiar with the characters — and they were among my *favorites* — when I found out that Eclipse was planning on reviving the book.

LOU: *Those old back-issues have gone up in price somewhat these days, I wonder why!* (Laughter.)

CHUCK: Yeah, I bought up a few myself. When I knew it was going to be a new book and no one else knew, I ran around and bought a bunch.

The original AIRBOY, from 1947

AIRBOY
COMICS
NOV.
A PUBLICATION
SO LONG, VALKYRIE.... THE BOYS AT THE AIRFIELD WILL BE SURPRISED TO SEE ME COME IN THIS WAY!!
YES, AIRBOY..... AND YOU'LL BE EVEN MORE SURPRISED WHEN YOU PULL THAT RIPCORD!
Give
Now
To Your Community Chest
10¢

© 1947 Hillman Periodicals, Inc.

"Cat Yronwode is a big Heap fan."

VITAL STATISTICS

Name: Chuck Dixon
Born: 14 April 1954 — Philadelphia
Occupation: Comics Writer
Credits: AIRBOY; various and sundry AIRBOY tie-ins; STRIKE!; EVANGELINE; SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN; WINTERWORLD; others
Favorite President: Teddy Roosevelt
Favorite Family: Wife Elma, son Ben (6)
Favorite Ancient AIRBOY Story: "The Rats"

LOU: *Did you know that you were getting the writing assignment then?*

CHUCK: This was I guess back in December of '85 when I knew I was going to be doing the book, but it wasn't common knowledge. I used my insider information and bought up all those back-issues. *(Laughter.)*

LOU: *But you knew that you were going to be getting the book?*

CHUCK: Yeah. Tim and I had submitted our proposal about how to bring the characters into the '80s.

LOU: *Timothy Truman and you cooked it all up together, right?*

CHUCK: Yeah. There was the now fabled afternoon in Tim's basement during which we thrashed out the whole series and how we would bring the characters back and in what guise would they be, would they be the children of the originals or the originals themselves and that type of thing.

LOU: *Right, and you have exactly one child and the rest of them are the original characters.*

CHUCK: Yes, the rest *are* the originals. The tricky one was how to bring back Valkyrie and have her still young and beautiful.

LOU: *You pulled the Captain America trick there.*

CHUCK: Yeah, yeah. *(Laughter.)* But it *had* to be the original Valkyrie.

LOU: *It's reminiscent in a way of Terry Lee and the Dragon Lady, how he started out young and then aged while she didn't, and he was courting her there by the end of Caniff's run.*

CHUCK: Yeah.

LOU: *Well, tell me something about the way you see the AIRBOY characters. How did you conceive of the tragic end to the first Airboy's life?*

CHUCK: Well, it was pretty cut and dried, we had to have the original Airboy out of the way. We had him as this basically dried-up burnt-out frustrated old guy who had been used as Misery's pawn for decades and had had it up to *here*, you know, with all of that — and we figured the character just couldn't go on, you don't want to read about this frustrated and enraged person. So we needed a new Airboy and we figured the most likely kind of thing would be a son.

LOU: *Plus you really can't go around calling a 60-year-old man Airboy.*

CHUCK: Yeah. It's kind of tough, you know, and there's a temptation even now to change the title to AIRMAN.

LOU: *Yeah, and when you consider that Airboy was Airboy from 1942 until 1953, you had a lot of "boy" there too.* (Laughter.)

CHUCK: And aging all of the time, he was a character that aged.

LOU: *Right, he did, at least into his early 20s or something like that by the end of the run. Another thing, you chose to put Hirota into the cast and he was supposed to have died in AIR FIGHTERS #3.*

CHUCK: Yes. We'll be dealing with that in the AIRBOY graphic novel. But yeah, he supposedly died; but he made it to the island of Tinian in the South Pacific where he waited out the rest of the War.

LOU: *Who's going to be drawing that?*

CHUCK: We haven't decided on an artist yet, I'm only about halfway through writing it. It looks like a 64-pager, and we're going to try to get somebody *hot! (Laughter.)*

LOU: *Another thing, how did you like bringing back the Heap?*

CHUCK: You know the hardest thing about bringing back the Heap is getting all of the flak about ripping off the Man-Thing.

LOU: *Oh, gosh!*

CHUCK: We get some of that. But the Heap is a lot of fun to write, and I get a lot of help on that from **Cat Yronwode** because she's a big Heap fan. She helps me with what I call the Heaptions, the captions you know — "You are the Heap, you are a pretty muddy thing." *(Laughter.)* She helps a lot on them. So with her help I've really got a hang on it, because I didn't

Valkyrie seems pretty well-preserved after forty years.

© 1988 Chuck Dixon and Stan Woch

"A lot of dictators are backed by the U.S."

© 1986 Dixon, Truman and Yeates

want to parody the Man-Thing. I wanted it to come full circle and be like the original Heap brought up to the '80s. The problem *with* the Heap is that the image may have been frightening in the '40s but it *isn't* very frightening today, so we made him much larger, and through **Tim Truman**'s design he's a lot fiercer looking. I'm now having fun with the Heaptions, they're an integral part of every story he appears in.

LOU: *One thing I know you took a lot of flak for was the one panel in which you showed Ronald Reagan's autographed poster in a dictator's office. Was that a cheap shot, and if not then why?*

CHUCK: I don't believe so. First of all — and I'm not copping out because I believe in what Tom did — but **Tom Yeates** is the villain, *he* put the poster in the background. But it did fit with what I was trying to get at with General Arista, that he was an American-backed dictator. There are a lot of dictators backed by the United States, they're in power because of American military aid, and the American public probably doesn't really know a lot about these people that we back. We back nice guys too, of course, but it seems that anybody that says he's against communism, we'll put the money up for whatever they want to do, their little reigns of terror.

LOU: *But basically couldn't you say almost the same thing about our supporting Stalin during World War II? He was no bed of roses, after all, but we did ally with him against Hitler, gave him supplies to fight against Hitler. I'm not saying it was a very moral move, but it was a very smart move.*

CHUCK: Yeah, but we didn't have a whole lot of choice in that matter.

LOU: *And the instance of the poster in AIRBOY, this was even before the fall of Marcos, right?*

CHUCK: Yeah, this was before. I'd love to think AIRBOY was responsible for the fact that the **Reagan** administration seems to have turned around on some of this. Even though they still wholeheartedly support the Contras, they have seemed to back away from **Marcos** and some of the other **Waldheim** thug-type dictators, and they seem to have been trying to straighten up South Korea as well. The United States is applying pressure there and I would *like* to see that continue.

A lot of people felt that the message in AIRBOY #2 was anti-American, which it isn't. I feel that we were supporting American ideals there. I think it would be great if *everyone* lived like in America! Of course every country doesn't like America, but then supporting some of these basically criminal types isn't the best way to improve our foreign relations.

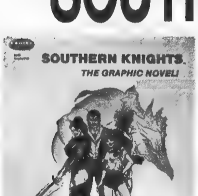
The infamous Reagan poster from AIRBOY #2. The poster's inscription, which reads "Best wishes, General — your pal, Ron" was construed as anti-American

LOU: *While we're still on the subject of the comic books here, where is AIRBOY heading in the future?*

CHUCK: Well, we're going to explore a little bit more with the supporting characters. There's a major storyline coming up for Hirota. Also Lester Mansfield, the head of security for Nelson Aviation, we'll fill in more of his background. And basically during the next year there will be a lot of changes for the Airboy character himself. He'll definitely move to the forefront of the series. His problem is he's like an actor saddled in a movie with a lot of great character actors and they're all trying to steal the scene from him. So there's a lot of characters to deal with, but Davy will definitely take the forefront and we'll see a lot of changes in his life, as relates to Nelson Aviation and as relates to a *lot* of the morality that basically Nelson Aviation is an arms company, so he'll deal a little bit with the morality of being an arms dealer.

LOU: *You know, I find myself wondering how effective a director of an arms company may be if he's running around all of the time with his cronies and fighting bad guys in South America and all of this other stuff. I guess he's like Tony Stark and Iron Man, he must have one great bunch of*

SOUTHERN KNIGHTS!



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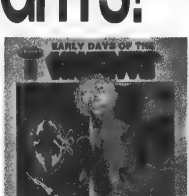

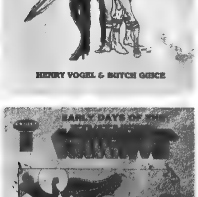

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A COMICS INTERVIEW PUBLICATION

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"I invented Happy Comics and created reprints."

subordinates working for him, especially when he's trying to overhaul the whole thing.

CHUCK: Yeah, that's going to be one of Davy's problems; he makes impossible demands on Nelson Aviation and then isn't there to see how they are fleshed out. A lot of times it doesn't work. In one of the issues he says, you know, they're not going to sell arms anymore to countries that are treating their people poorly — he decided to be a human rights advocate, which is hard for an arms dealer, and he just ordered the company to do it. Well, he's still just a kid, he doesn't understand that you can't do that without going bankrupt, and some of that is what we're going to deal with.

LOU: *Yeah, plus you have the problem of, like when the Carter administration tried to do the disapproval bit on countries where human rights weren't being respected as they felt they should be, you might lose the support of several allies you might need.*

CHUCK: Yeah, it's all politics.

LOU: *Yeah, right, and that's what makes it such an interesting subject, at least to my mind. Which one do you enjoy writing most, EVANGELINE or AIRBOY?*

CHUCK: AIRBOY, definitely AIRBOY. EVANGELINE is a difficult book to write because I'm creating a whole new futuristic universe, but the characters in AIRBOY live on their own, they really do. A lot of the ease of writing AIRBOY comes from the 26 issues that **Tim Truman** edited, because he was like a guiding force behind the book, straightening out the characters and the mood and pacing. Pacing is the toughest part because AIRBOY chews up a lot of material. *(Laughter.)* You have to move rapidly because it sets its own pace.

LOU: *Right, and there's so much of it to write. You've also got a new series out, STRIKE! How's that doing?*

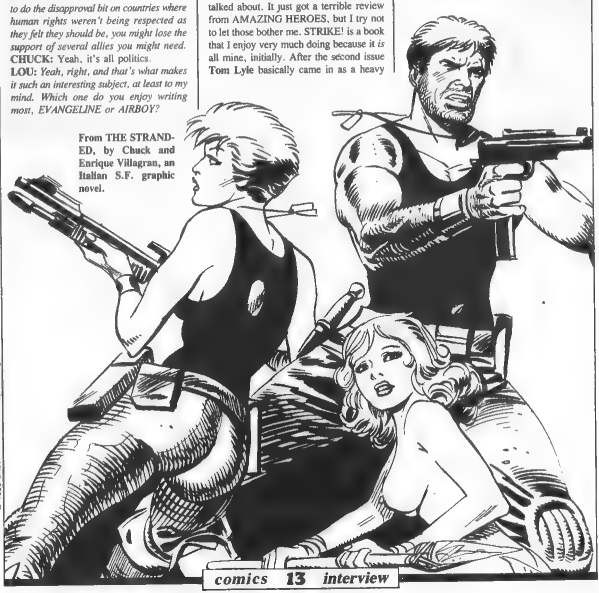
CHUCK: Well, everyone tells me STRIKE! is a hot book. I wish it were being ordered hotter. *(Laughter.)* But I keep hearing how hot it is, and it's very well talked about. It just got a terrible review from AMAZING HEROES, but I try not to let those bother me. STRIKE! is a book that I enjoy very much doing because it *is* all mine, initially. After the second issue **Tom Lyle** basically came in as a heavy 50% collaborator, and we really enjoy guiding the character's career.

LOU: *There's one thing that I wanted to ask you about, which is how in the world did you ever find out about this Sgt. Strike that appeared on the back of a cereal box? I'd never heard of him!*

CHUCK: Well, I'm sure by the time this interview appears everyone will know that that is completely and utterly a fabrication.

LOU: *It was!*

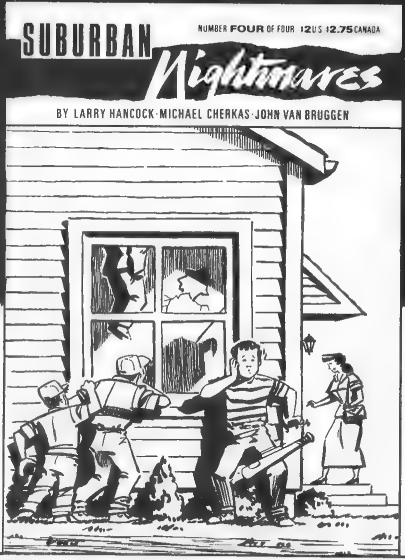
CHUCK: Yes. See, when I originally thought of Strike, and Sgt. Strike, I realized that the only thing that the two major comics companies had over the little independents was they had 50 years of characters to draw on, so I thought, "Well, why can't a little company *make up* a character and draw on it." So that's where it came from. So I invented "Happy



From THE STRANDED, by Chuck and Enrique Villagran, an Italian S.F. graphic novel.

© 1988 Chuck Dixon and Enrique Villagran

'ARE YOU NOW OR HAVE YOU EVER BEEN...'
'YES.'



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"I hope nobody got mad about this."

Comics" and created the reprints -- they're all written by me and drawn by various people.

LOU: *Well, you certainly hoodwinked me with that.*

CHUCK: Then I can be proud, because you're a Golden Age aficionado.

LOU: *The Golden Age was like the '80s, though, in the way so many companies jumped up and down at the drop of a hat.*

CHUCK: Yeah. It was fun coming up with the whole thing. I really had a *ball* writing the text pieces, the history of this fictitious company. And I think all of the artists did a *great* job of copying the style of the period. The funny thing is that people will come up to me and say, "These reprints in the back, they're *stupid!*" *(Laughter.)* And I say, "But they're not reprints, I wrote them!" Then they kind of look at me funny and walk away, and I'll see the same people later and they'll tell me how great they are — because they're funny once you realize they're a joke. I hope nobody got mad about this. We weren't trying to pull anybody's leg with it, it was just to have some fun.

LOU: *Talking about this reminds me of the book coming out from Hero Comics that Roy Thomas is doing, CAPTAIN THUNDER AND BLUE BOLT, in which he's got the father and the son, both of them superheroes, the original of which did not actually appear in comics beforehand because it's just a made up 1940s superhero.*

CHUCK: Right. Also there's Dark Horse's THE AMERICAN, which is an excellent book. That's another thing on the same wavelength. Actually Eclipse had *two* ideas like that when they found mine in a dusty old file drawer; mine predated everyone else's. I originally presented it to Comico at about the same time EVANGELINE #2 was out. Ideas are a virus, though; everyone has the same one at the same time.

LOU: *Okay. Well, can you tell me something about 4Winds, like what it is?*

CHUCK: Well, it's a production company, basically we either find projects or come up with projects and we try to get the right writer with the right artist and package it for whatever company — right now it's for Eclipse. They have been very very good for us. We're not exclusively with Eclipse but they're basically the first people that we show the stuff we come up with to, and they're always anxious to see something new.

LOU: *Did you have anything to do with or any input on THE PROWLER?*

CHUCK: Just in enjoying it. I really didn't have that much input, it was just sort of Tim would tell me stuff and I'd just, you know, bob my head and go *Wow!* That's been one of my favorites.

LOU: *Yes, I like that one too, considerably. Something else you're doing is WINTERWORLD. What's that about?*

CHUCK: Well, there's not a whole lot to say, it's pretty much self-explanatory. I saw **Jorge Zaffino's** work, a very brief portfolio, a few Xeroxes, and I just thought he was terrific, so I wrote WINTERWORLD *for* him, wrote the kinds of things that obviously he likes to draw, outdoors stuff and high adventure, semi-futuristic. He seems to be interested in post-Apocalyptic type stories, and he sure did a hell of a job! I'm real proud of it. It's like the first thing I've ever had utter total freedom on, no one could tell me how the characters would act or things like that, and I approached it more like a feature film.

LOU: *Is there any chance you're going to extend it beyond the three-issue mini-series?*

CHUCK: Yes, I'd like to see a sequel. I'd like to handle it just like a feature film and maybe do a sequel next year, three more issues.

LOU: *Well, what do you, like, have planned in the future?*

CHUCK: I've got a SKYWOLF mini-series which **Tom Lyle** is pencilling even as we speak, and I have a new VALKYRIE muni-series although I don't know yet who the artist is going to be on that, we're waiting to see if **Paul Gulacy** wants to go with it. Of course the AIRBOY graphic novel. I've written a graphic novel for **Enrique Villagran,** the brother of **Ricardo Villagran,** that's being published in Italy. I'm real interested in getting into the European market; I'm tired of always seeing the stuff coming over here, let's get something going the other way! They asked me as a favor to write something for these characters they came up with, so I just said fine and it's basically a real kick-butt sci-fi adventure.

LOU: *Okay, Chuck, any last thoughts?*

CHUCK: Geez. *(Laughter.)* I should say something about SWORDS OF TEXAS, that was a lot of fun to work on. It was like playing in Tim's little playground, the SCOUT universe, and I felt I did some of the best writing I'd ever done; basically because I knew that it was Tim at the other end of the pipeline. I've always found friendship to be a real impetus to do your best.

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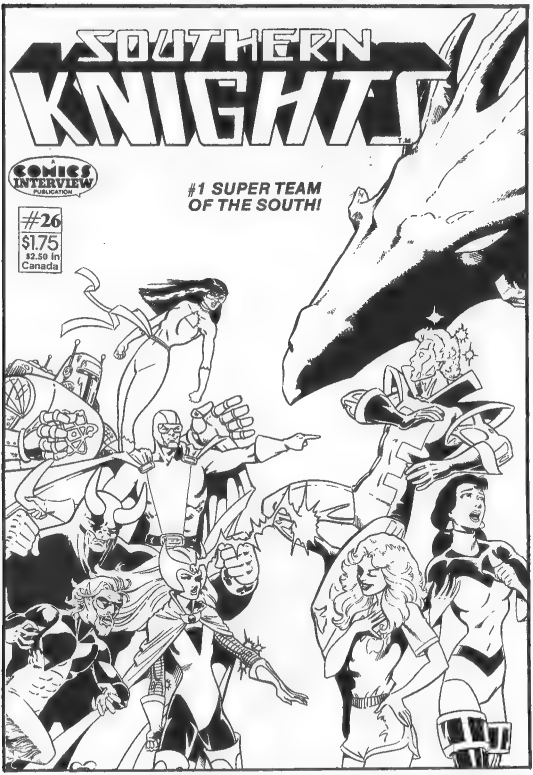

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by Henry Vogel

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"It would drive Bob Kane and me crazy."

JERRY ROBINSON

In Part One, last issue, Jerry told how he created The Joker, only to have his creation snatched out from under him, and other tales of the origin of Batman. Here, in Part Two of this massive three-part interview, Jerry discusses the lovelife of Batman creator Bob Kane, the invention of the full-page splash panel, and some surprising information about Golden Age pay rates.

STEVE RINGGENBERG: *What was Bob Kane like in those days?*

JERRY ROBINSON: Bob was a good-looking young man in his middle twenties. He was often involved in all-consuming romances; in fact, so was **Bill Finger.** I remember when Bill was first courting his wife, Portia. I think she was living in Rochester. It would drive Bob and me crazy because of his interminable phone calls to her wherever we were, in the apartment, the studio or even suddenly popping in a phone booth on the street. Portia is a charming and intelligent woman, by the way, and was a great asset to Bill in his career. Bob was also very intense about everything he did, including his love affairs. He loved to engage in repartee and one-liners. He could retell the entire routine of a comedian he heard the night before at some club.

STEVE: *Did you ever do practical jokes on each other in the studio? Like spilling disappearing ink on the other guy's artwork or something?*

JERRY: No, we had too much fear of having to do a drawing over again. Bob worked in his home. When I first met him he lived with his parents. I did most of my work on BATMAN at my own place.

It wasn't until a year or so later that we took a studio in the Times building at Times Square. **Bert Whitman,** who did the newspaper strip, DEBBIE DEAN, had the adjoining studio. I think it was there I also met **Irwin Hasen,** whose work you know in the comic books and in the strip DONDI. Both Irwin and Bert, who became an editorial cartoonist, have been

With a $75.00 monthly rent that included furnishings and maid service, 18-year-old Jerry Robinson sets out illustrating a brand new Batman, and conquers the world.

"We ripped some tiles off the wall, built

Before superheroes ran away with the field, men like Bat Masterson ruled the day. This version was based on Bat Masterson tv star Gene Barry. Opposite : Jerry and Mort Meskin tackle DC's original Vigilante.

BAT MASTERSON

lifelong friends. Later **George Roussos** was hired to assist and made a valuable contribution to the feature. This was during the period when I was still doing all the inking; and so that I could concentrate primarily on the figures, George started inking the backgrounds.

From there I went to work directly for DC, instead of for Bob, at their offices at 480 Lexington. And then I also had my own studio in an apartment I shared with several other artists **Bernie Klein** and **Mort Meskin** and others at various times. So that kind of crazy life in those early days really began after I stopped working directly with Bob. Some of the stories of those days I related to **Jules Feiffer** for his book THE GREAT COMIC BOOK HEROES. Like the time we were snowed in the studio one weekend with nothing to eat. We drew lots and the loser had to dig himself out and forage for food. It was one of the worst snowstorms in New York history and the entire city was closed down. Our studio at that time was on West 51st Street and the loser, I think it was **Bernie Klein**, had to plow his way down to 14th Street before he found anything open. He returned about 5 hours later with six eggs. As we had nothing to cook with in the studio we had to rely on our comic book ingenuity. We ripped some tiles off the bathroom wall, built a fire on top of them on the floor and fried the eggs on the hot tiles!

There were some wild times working with guys like **Charlie Biro** and the **Wood** brothers (Bob, Dick and later, Dave)...Sometimes we would get together to create a new title, write and draw the entire book over a weekend. Some of the events and spirit of the times were beautifully recaptured in Jules' book.

STEVE: *Did you do that because the page rates were so low that that was the only way you could make any money was to work that hard?*

JERRY: In part it was — they were low — but, you know, at that time the economy was quite different, so it wasn't all that bad, relatively. Most of us were young and single. It was not what we should have been getting, and we certainly tried to get higher rates. DC paid the highest page rates at the time — I guess by default as the other shops were so low, like MLJ.

STEVE: *Fox?*

JERRY: Fox, yeah, they were abysmal. But I can remember freelancing for as little as $12 a page.

STEVE: *Pencilling and inking?*

JERRY: Pencilling and inking. And I can remember also writing the script, pencilling and inking for $17 to $20 a page. I did some of the early BATMAN for — what? Thirty-five dollars a page, I guess, then I began to get some freelance accounts for $50 a page, which was quite good at that time. Even so, I used to walk around with hundreds of dollars of uncashed checks in my wallet. I was a single kid, only nineteen or twenty or so by that time. You know, my rent was, like $75 month for a furnished apartment, with maid service, in a brand new building.

STEVE: *That's painful to hear.*

JERRY: It's even painful for me to remember! One of my closest friends in those days was an artist — who I've already mentioned, **Bernie Klein** — from my hometown, Trenton, NJ. He contributed sports cartoons to the TRENTON TIMES and came to New York when he heard I was drawing BATMAN. I introduced him to DC...and we shared an apartment. He was killed in World War II at the beach head at Anzio, Italy. He was a fine artist and a terrific guy with a special zest for life. I was very influenced by **Bernie**...He was a few years older. He was a good-looking rugged kid, resembled a young **John Garfield**. He was an amateur boxer, and so he did a lot of sports and boxing strips. WHIRLWIND was one of his features. Bernie started downtown for MLJ, where, at that time **Charlie Biro** was working, and the **Wood** brothers, that's how I first met them, and also, next to Bernie, my closest friend, **Mort Meskin**, perhaps the most talented artist of all. We shared an apartment and studio for a number of years when Bernie went off to war. There were several years when we worked separately, and then we got together again and formed a partnership. We did a number of strips for DC, and also some new accounts for other publishers. There was a period where we did THE VIGILANTE and JOHNNY QUICK, both of which Mort created earlier. We did a many other features: BLACK TERROR, FIGHTING YANK and a number of individual books for **Simon and Kirby**...

STEVE: *How would you work together? What was your style?*

JERRY: Well, it would vary. Sometimes Mort would do the initial rough breakdowns and I would complete the pencils, that sort of thing, and then ink all or part of it. Sometimes I would do rough layouts and Mort would develop it and both of us would go back and ink in. We worked in all different ways. I think that mostly on the strips that Mort had started, like VIGILANTE and JOHNNY QUICK, he would usually do the initial breakdowns. He was most familiar with those features. We would do a lot of experimentation, with techniques and how we would visualize a particular story. A lot of them weren't continuing features, such as the

a fire and fried the eggs on the tiles!''

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"It was a great time to experiment."

VIGILANTE or JOHNNY QUICK, where we maintained a more or less constant approach. I also introduced Mort to DC and we became close friends as well as collaborators. It was a great time to experiment. I remember one time Mort and I did one entire story bleeding from white to black as if lit entirely overhead — just for the special effect and mood it established.

STEVE: *With real extreme shadows and real extreme light?*

JERRY: Yeah, everything bleeding down into black...just as a challenge. Sometimes we'd just outline everything with a pen and just add brush accents. Other times we'd just ink in all the blacks and leave everything else with only essential lines added. Various things like that, so it added some excitement to the work. But we learned a lot and it gave our work a different look. It also served to keep up our level of interest and excitement about the work. We also experimented with papers and other techniques such as inking on vellum overlays for different brush effects. I remember for Timely we would occasionally do a finished drawing ad lib, you know, directly with pen and ink without any pencils.

STEVE: *Did you ever experiment with things like Benday and zipatone?*

JERRY: Yes, we did.

STEVE: *Would you generally ink with a pen or ink, with a brush, or both?*

JERRY: Both. We'd deliberately vary our routine. You know, with all pen or just brush or sometimes a combination.

STEVE: *To touch on the JOHNNY QUICK strip, Meskin created that, right?*

JERRY: Yes.

STEVE: *That was a super-fast character like the Flash, but he handled the speed differently. He had multiple figures rather than the speed lines and the blurring.*

Mort Meskin created a different way to visualize a super-speedster. While the Flash had speed lines and blurring, Jerry and Mort's Johnny Quick had multiple images.

POPEYE – 60th ANNIVERSARY • POPEYE – 60th ANNIVERSARY

POPEYE SPECIAL #1

by Ron Fortier
Ben Dunn & Bill Pearson

We are re-soliciting for *Popeye Special #1.* Originally released in September, 1987, spotty distribution in some areas and sell-outs in other areas have made this excellent comic a hard-to-find collector's item. This is not a second printing. We are offering a limited supply of **1st PRINTING** copies. Be sure to reserve your copy today.

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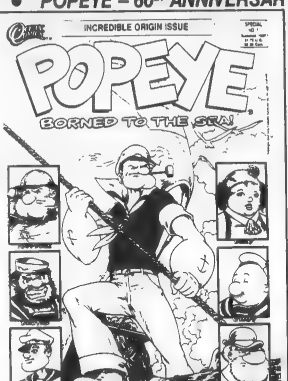

POPEYE SPECIAL #2

by Ron Fortier, Ben Dunn
Tom Grummett, Gary Kato & Dell Barras

Popeye celebrates his own 60th anniversary as well as Australia's 100th anniversary as he and the crew of the U.S. Chester set anchor in "Double-Trouble Down Under." Featuring the sure-to-be controversial solution to the Brutus/Bluto dilemma. All new story and art.

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POPEYE – 60th ANNIVERSARY • POPEYE – 60th ANNIVERSARY

"We were inventing the 'language' of comics."

Throughout the '60s and '70s Jerry illustrated many actors and actresses for "Playbill," such as the cast of "Best Little Whorehouse in Texas."

What you've been sellin' all week, I'm gonna give away tonight!
DELORES HALL as Jewel
KAREN SUTHERLAND as Taddy Jo
VALERIE LEIGH BIXLER as Linda Lou
MONICA TILLER as Dawn

JERRY: Exactly. That was a very clever innovation of Mort's, the multiple action. It was a first in the comics, reflected the striving for the illusion of motion reminiscent of **Duchamp's** NUDE DESCENDING A STAIRCASE. That's the sort of thing Jules was intrigued with when we discussed those early days for his book. Every time we'd do something new, an innovation, it was a first, and it was exciting. I mean, we didn't have traditions or too many taboos. And so fortunately for us, as the comic books had just begun, it didn't have any past and so we knew that when we tried something new, it was probably an innovation. At times we struggled with the limitations of the form. We were inventing the "language" of the comics, the "look" and story-telling techniques. . . exploring its potential . . . experimenting and extending its parameters.

Well, in the process, I think we set the pattern, with very few exceptions, for what came later, almost in the same sense that **D.W. Griffith** and the early film pioneers invented the early film techniques — you know, closeups, establishing shots,

"One episode I remember was the first

parallel editing, the moving camera, etc. One episode I remember was the first time we devoted a full page to a splash panel. That was very exciting. And we had to battle editors to do things like that, because their philosophy was that the more panels and the more artwork, they were getting more for their money. And if you were getting more money, you were expected to put in more panels, so sometimes you'd have twelve panels on a page, and it would be a deadly amount of work and would limit us in what we wanted to do visually. Our first breakthrough was to combine two panels or three panels. Remember what immediately preceded us in the comic books were reprints of comic strips as in FAMOUS FUNNIES, etc.

STEVE: *Right.*

JERRY: We began to want to do more visually, we had to break down those restrictions, so we got a full panel across, which added dimension. We began to do vertical panels, panels of different shapes, vignettes and other visual effects. All those were innovations. They look simple now, but before they existed, somebody had to make the breakthrough and make it work. Traditionally on the first page you'd have an introduction, sometimes just a panel at the top or a strip across the top. We then expanded to maybe a third of the page, and eventually devoted the whole page for the opening shot. I mean that was lavish! I think because of the popularity of BATMAN we were able to do things with our feature which was more dependent on the visual and the mood.

STEVE: *Do you think you were the first to do a double-page spread?*

JERRY: That I don't know. I don't recall if we ever did a double-page spread on BATMAN in those days. I think that came later on. But a full page, I'm almost sure we were the first or among the first with that.

STEVE: *In your rendering styles and storytelling, were you influenced much by the strip artists? Foster and Noel Sickles and people like that?*

JERRY: Well, I was when I first saw **Noel Sickles.** Somebody brought his work into the studio, I think it was **Fred Ray** because I think **Sickles** appeared in the Harrisburg paper where Fred was from. And he brought in clips of it. We went mad about his work.

STEVE: *SCORCHY SMITH.*

JERRY: Yeah, SCORCHY SMITH.

STEVE: *Great stuff.*

JERRY: Yes, fantastic. In fact, I remember we all chipped in to get photostats of all of them so we could each have a copy, which I think I still have in my files. I also have a few originals which he signed for me years later when I had him as a guest at an NCS meeting. He was a charming and most modest man — and a brilliant illustrator.

STEVE: *Scorchy has been put out in books. Have you seen the Nostalgia Press books?*

JERRY: Yes, I've seen those, I think it has some of the same episodes that we had. I think **Foster** and **Caniff** we knew more intimately and admired very much, particularly **Caniff.** I think we were influenced by **Caniff's** sparkling black and white and his unmatched story-telling and character development. He's a master of the sequential narrative. When I started to ink BATMAN, I was intrigued by the black and white and kept pushing for more of that in the strip. I can't think of anybody in the comic books at that time that was an influence in our development of BATMAN.

STEVE: *What about Jack Kirby?*

JERRY: Kirby was perhaps, later, in his marvelous action. I was a great admirer of Jack's, but he had his own unique approach. I don't think he was a direct influence on BATMAN, in the kind of things we were trying to do with the black and white, and the somewhat more realism of **Caniff** rather than extreme fantasy and "superism".

STEVE: *The sort of chiaroscuro effects?*

JERRY: Yes, chiaroscuro, and also the storytelling, the intimate, what I would call the intimate sequential narrative **Milton Caniff** developed. We also tried to adapt a lot from the movies. At times we saw something in a film that we had done in the comics that we thought we'd created. You know it's like the old story of the inventor who was up in his attic for thirty years and finally came down with this fantastic invention that was going to revolutionize our lives. He had invented the

Below, Jerry's pencils, and opposite, his inks of his war stories done for Marvel in the '50s.

ABLE ONE TO SQUINCH? WHERE ARE YOU? DO YOU SEE ANYTHING? OVER!
THINGS HUNCHED VARIOUS INTO FAJAH VALLEY... AND WE'RE STILL SOV' ...NOTHIN' IN SIGHT... OVER!
KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN! OVER AND OUT!
YEZZIR! ... WHAT ELSE DO THEY THINK I'M DOIN'? HOW'S NICKY TAKIN' IT, WILLIS?
LOOKS OKAY TO ME!

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time we devoted a full page to a splash."

typewriter. *(Laughter from interviewer.)* Well, he invented it. He had never seen such a thing before . . . The things that we thought we had created, and some of them I think we did, if we saw them used in the movies, it was kind of a reaffirmation that we were not so crazy after all! "Hey, look at that. He's using our idea!" The prime example of that was **Orson Welles Citizen Kane.** When that came out, it flipped our minds totally. To see it now is one thing, but to see it then was revolutionary. Welles used a lot of the things that we were doing in the comics, or tried to do, within the limitations of the graphic image, without the magic of film. We would go back and see it over and over. I think **Fred Ray** had the record of forty or fifty times and I guess I was up in the twenties, or so. We knew every line and we'd recite the dialogue endlessly while we were working. It was a marvellous picture. One of the innovations that I recall was the ceiling shots. He had full sets.

STEVE: *Right. He was the first to do that.*

JERRY: We had been doing that, shooting low level shots to get the effects up on the ceiling, feeling enclosed areas and the space.

STEVE: *Well, BATMAN especially, often had Batman's silhouette thrown on the ceiling and people would look up and see it.*

JERRY: Right, so these angle shots were marvellous, and we were experimenting through knot holes, through keyholes and a number of shots in CITIZEN KANE were similar, through the floor, etc., and some of the sequential devices that he used we were trying to employ. We also began to experiment with creating illusions of time by manipulating the panels.

Some of the artists today . . . I think they're great, they probably know far more than we did in those days, in terms of anatomy, etc. We were concentrating on other things. I mean we tried to improve our draftmanship and anatomy within a limited degree, and perspective, but only for our own purposes. It wasn't a means to an end. I can remember we'd talk about it, that some artist put in every muscle, and every fold and we thought it was inappropriate or unnecessary. It destroyed the illusion. We didn't want it *that* realistic.

I remember Bob studying **Foster's** anatomy, but not the drive for realism, as such. When things got too real, we would look at it with some disdain as being too photographic. That we felt we could do any time — copy a photograph, but lose the essence of the motion, the mystery of it and destroy the fluidity of the BATMAN figure.

In a way, it was fortunate that I had never taken drawing leasons in my life before. And I don't think Bob ever did either. Bob was a "comic" cartoonist before he did adventure strips — you know, GINGER and others. Bob, I think is underrated in many cases by his peers, as an artist. There aren't too many who can make that leap from a career as a "comic" artist to an illustrative artist, at least to the level of BATMAN or doing any adventure strip. It's *extremely* hard to do it on that level. You can go the other way much more easily. I know from my experience, once I began to draw illustratively. I've been able to illustrate thirty or forty books, textbooks, books on atomic energy, history, biography, and science, drawing primarily from my experience and what I learned as a comic book artist. That gave me everything, all the fundamentals. Then I was able to do so-called "humorous illustration" with ease. But, the other way around is very difficult and I've seen other artists who were never able to do it as Bob did. You know, we wanted to give it a distinctive look.

When I look at BATMAN today . . . it's perhaps drawn *too* well, far better than we used to, but I believe it lost something in the process. I think that kind of drawing is better suited for other characters.

STEVE: *What do you think of some of the later work, like Neal Adams, who did BATMAN ultra-realistically?*

JERRY: As I say, he's a terrific artist and he did magnificant drawing, but I think, I don't know, it's just my own opinion, maybe it's self-serving in that we didn't draw BATMAN that way, and I've drawn very illustrative stuff myself later, I just think that BATMAN was better portrayed another way.

STEVE: *But you're thinking that realism had lost a lot of the flavor perhaps?*

JERRY: I thought so, yeah. I think it would be hard not to lose some of the flavor, some of the mystery, some of the drama and mood. If only because so many other features began to be drawn that way, too. So when BATMAN, too, was drawn so realistically, it became too much like

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"BATMAN became too much like other strips."

other strips and it lost its unique identity. In the early days, you look at BATMAN compared with some of the other features, it had a special look that was all its own. I think some of the others were like that, too. CAPTAIN MARVEL had its own look and SUPERMAN did too. And I think they were three distinct paths that others imitated. I think there has been some over-emphasis on the drawing on these features. Some features perhaps need it and are enhanced by the magnificent art. Some of the science fiction that's being done now are remarkable visualizations and I think that approach is well suited to those kinds of strips.

STEVE: *How did you feel about Alex Raymond's work, who drew a lot from live models and photos?*

JERRY: I think the live models were just. . .

STEVE: *For promotional purposes?*

JERRY: Yes. **Raymond** only used realism up to a certain point. He used photographs at times for characters but for the most part, the sets, etc. were his own unique style, very suited to his subject.

STEVE: *It was very dynamic in spite of that realism.*

JERRY: And nicely told with beautiful pen, brush and ink work. The strip was limited however. He didn't do the kind of sophisticated stories and character development that **Caniff** did, but it is right to say he had his own vision. I think that's at the heart of the art of the comics, really, and **Caniff** and **Raymond** are prime examples. **Al Capp, Chester Gould, Herriman** are others that come to mind. Once the comics begin to lose their individuality, I think they lose some of their power and effectiveness. Those strips and others are classics because they are a particular artists' vision with a particular graphic look. That's the heart of the comics. It's a very personal creation, not only in the comic books, but in the strips. It's an individual's art. It's not essentially a collaborative art. I think it began to be that when you had all very good artists collaborating where it didn't look like anyone's work anymore, but just with a very polished, if professional, look.

STEVE: *Do you think the process of subcontracting comics now, where they have a penciller, an inker, letterer, a writer and they're all separate, do you think that degraded the medium?*

JERRY: I wouldn't say that. I don't know exactly how they're working today. I don't know how closely their collaboration is, exactly how they break it up, but we collaborated to a certain degree as I described. We had pencillers and inkers too, somebody would letter and there would be a writer, so I don't know if there's that kind of a distinction. I'm just theorizing but in those days when a strip was created like a BATMAN or a SUPERMAN or a CAPTAIN MARVEL, there was one creator who had his unique stamp. . . his design. A lot of the fine artists today who do one strip and tomorrow another, draw the same way, except that its a different

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"Boy, I learned to hate LASSIE!"

character. Because of that many features don't have as much in graphic terms to distinguish them from one another.

STEVE: *Speaking just for yourself, when you were doing something like say a western, would you apply a different visual style than if you were doing a superhero?*

JERRY: Yeah, definitely. I'd try to give every feature or sometimes an individual story its own look. I wouldn't draw JOHNNY QUICK or VIGILANTE the way we were drawing BATMAN. Mort established a look for JOHNNY QUICK and the VIGILANTE that we changed somewhat in the collaboration, but we tried to keep that original look. I tried to establish other "styles" for others such as BAT MASTERSON, LASSIE, ATOMAN, THE GREEN HORNET and others that suited each concept.

STEVE: *Let's see, you worked with Meskin; this is the post-BATMAN period, and what were you doing after you worked with Mort?*

JERRY: Well, let's see...Mort was always a big influence. Mort was the only one of us who had gone to art school, Pratt Institute, so I always looked up to Mort as the authority in terms of anatomy and all the fundamentals. I tried to learn from him, and there is one memory in particular I have when we shared a studio together. If I asked him how to draw something, he wouldn't tell me a damn thing except: "Work it out". I mean he would have me struggle over a figure for a day if I had to! He would tell me when I had it, but he wouldn't tell me how to do it. So, I was frustrated in that sense. But, of course, it was the best thing for me because I had to learn for myself by doing. I learned a lot from Mort by studying his work...After Mort, well, I had begun, let me see...I had begun to teach at what was then the Cartoonists and Illustrator's School founded by **Burne Hogarth**, and Cy **Rhodes**. Burne and I have been best friends since those days. He is a brilliant artist, as you know, and was an inspiring teacher. We conducted many seminars at *C & I* together. In recent years we've lectured at schools and colleges together.

STEVE: *C & I was in the post-war period.?*

JERRY: Yes.

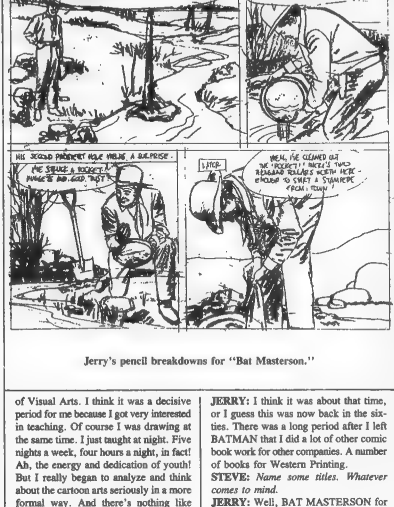
STEVE: *Hogarth didn't start that until after the war, right?*

JERRY: Yes, it was after the war. I think in the late 40's. I think Mort taught there too, for a while, that's how I started teaching there in 1950. We were collaborating around that time. Cartoonists' and illustrators later became The School of Visual Arts. I think it was a decisive period for me because I got very interested in teaching. Of course I was drawing at the same time. I just taught at night. Five nights a week, four hours a night, in fact! Ah, the energy and dedication of youth! But I really began to analyze and think about the cartoon arts seriously in a more formal way. And there's nothing like teaching for learning, you know.

STEVE: *What, specifically were you teaching?*

JERRY: I was teaching more or less what I teach today at The New School for Social Research - The Cartoon Arts. Although I guess I've expanded the course since then because I wasn't doing all the things I've done since, in terms of editorial cartoons and book illustration. So I guess it was mostly comic strips and comic books. I concentrated on visualization and storytelling and characterization, things that I thought I was best at, or I had something to say. I recently signed to do a text book but I haven't started it yet. It'll be more of an analysis of the drawing and the thought process in the various genres of comic art.

STEVE: *When did you start branching out into book illustration?*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THE BOY NOW TAKES FIRST AID SERIOUSLY—BUT THERE'S NO "GOLDIE" IN THAT FUR YET! I'LL TRY ONCE MORE AT OTHER TERRITORIES.
HIS SECOND PROSPECT HOLE HOLDS A DIFFERENT STORY.
HE SPARE A ROCKET IN PANIC'S AND GOES "BOOM"
LATER
WELL, HE CLIMBED OUT OK—DOESN'T! I HAVE TWO BROKEN LEGS! WITH HERE—ENOUGH TO START A SYNDROME FROM TODAY!

Jerry's pencil breakdowns for "Bat Masterson."

JERRY: I think it was about that time, or I guess this was now back in the sixties. There was a long period after I left BATMAN that I did a lot of other comic book work for other companies. A number of books for Western Printing.

STEVE: *Name some titles. Whatever comes to mind.*

JERRY: Well, BAT MASTERSON for a couple of years, an adaptation of the TV show.

STEVE: *The newspaper strip?*

JERRY: No, in the comic books.

STEVE: *Because I know that Howard Nostrand was doing the newspaper strip.*

JERRY: Also LASSIE for a couple of years. Boy, I learned to hate that dog!

STEVE: *Was the dog hard to draw?*

JERRY: Well, it was a nuisance to have her in every panel. After the first few issues it was not very exciting. It was boring.

STEVE: *Drawing a collie over and over again.*

JERRY: I used to hide her everywhere, you know you'd see her nose sticking in a panel. You'd see her tail out of a field of grass, anything to get rid of her...Then, I don't remember how I happened to do it as I did very little humor

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Dear Chuck:

You've got to be kidding! The Cycops as presidential Storm Troopers? Come on! Still, if you've got doubts, I'll try to set your mind at ease.

First, the Cycop Force is a division of the Interstellar Bureau of Criminal Investigation. The IBCI answers to the Department of Interstellar Justice. Yes, I know you know that. The point is, I'm not even in the chain of command. The accusation that the Cycops are my private army – well, that's absurd.

The Cycops' true purpose is the same as it's been for the last 50 years: the protection of human rights. That's what we're here for, that's why the Human Coalition was formed: to guarantee civil rights on all worlds inhabited by humans. The Cycops make damn sure we all do our jobs.

To answer your questions about the Cycops, themselves: no, they aren't supermen. Yes, a Cycop can lift 2000 pounds. He can punch a hole through two inches of dura-steel. He can fight an army single-handedly. But only in Overdrive. The rest of the time, he's no stronger than you or I. And he can't stay in Overdrive longer than 30 minutes, because the stress will kill him.

As for the M-suits: I can't believe you swallowed that rumor about invincible armored warriors waiting to overthrow the Coalition. The Cycops' M-suits are designed to absorb impact. Otherwise, if a 'cop tried to put his fist through a two-inch dura-steel plate, he'd break every bone in his hand. The suit would also provide extra skeletal support if he tried to lift 2000 pounds. But an M-suit won't stop beam weapons – like blazers – so it hardly makes a Cycop invulnerable.

Now, about their internal computers: you've got that part right – there probably isn't a computer system around that a Cycop and his comp can't break into. That's why we formed the Cycop Force in the first place. (you'd be surprised at the kind of incriminating evidence some people will store in a computer). But in order to get that evidence in spite of sophisticated security programs, you need a computer which is pretty sophisticated, itself. And we just don't build them any more sophisticated than the one in a Cycop's skull.

I can't really tell you exactly how the process works – I'm not a cybernetics expert – but the 'tecs implant a tiny seed (more like a virus, really) in the brain of the future 'cop. That seed grows into a network that twines all through the brain tissue. No strand of that network is thicker than a few molecules, yet it interfaces with the Cycop's own nervous system. The result is a computer of extraordinary power and abilities.

Using the comp's control over his involuntary nervous system, a Cycop can go into Overdrive, or block out pain. It's also the computer that makes him inhumanly accurate with weapons, and that gives him access to data from the sensors implanted throughout his body.

I must agree with you that the cost is very high. I don't like the idea of drafting five-year-olds any more than you do. Unfortunately, the implant process tends to kill anybody over six. The decision to use orphans because of that mortality rate was cold-blooded, but it was also necessary to protect the government from lawsuits by any relatives of the children.

There is no doubt, however, of the benefits of the twelve years of training these children receive at Cycop Academy. All that martial arts and weapons instruction, as well as the classes in criminal law and programming, results in superb officers. Of course, it hardly makes for a normal childhood....

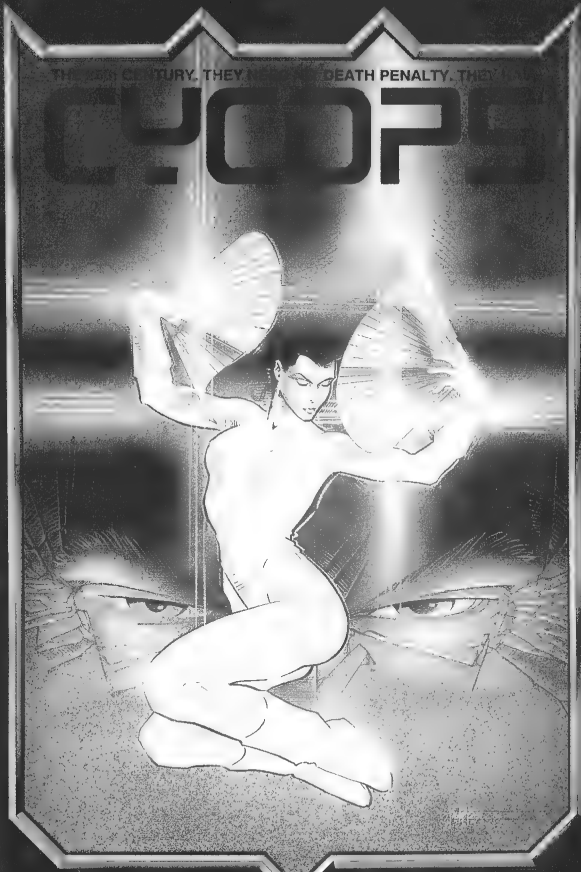
It's also unfortunate that one of the effects of Overdrive is the greatly reduced lifespan, but that was the price we had to pay. It's as if they live twice the life of the rest of us, so they live only half as long.

In short, Chuck, I really don't think the Cycops deserve your fear. What they do deserve is your gratitude.

And, perhaps, your sympathy.

– President Dale Kamdr
September 29, 2453

JULIE WOODCOCK & BRIAN STELFREE



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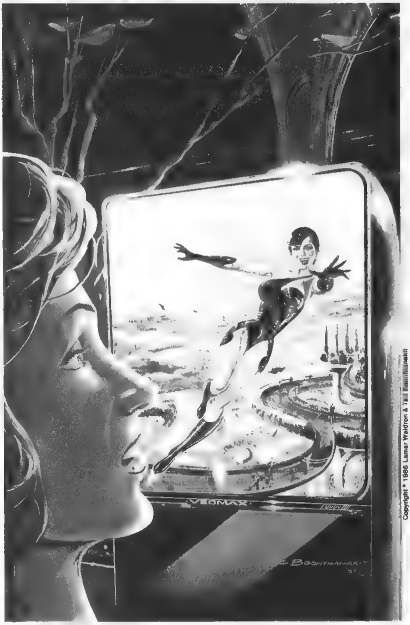

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A COMICS INTERVIEW PUBLICATION

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"One momentous event happened just then."

for the comics at that time, but I did BULLWINKLE for a few issues. I liked doing humor and as I was just going up to Maine to work and I thought it would be fun for the summer. I had no idea of continuing doing it. I wrote and drew a number of stories. The only thing I remember about one of them was that I did a parody on old Hollywood movies, which you might enjoy if you ever find a copy. I wrote new lyrics for classic songs for Bullwinkle, which was kind of fun. But those were one shots. For a number of years I worked closely with Stan Lee, just before the Marvel era.

STEVE: *At Atlas?*

JERRY: Yes, I did a lot of various titles for him, war books, love stories, weird stories, crime. There was a whole period there I guess, it was pre '60s, I did some continuing features, but most of them were for different titles.

STEVE: *Did you prefer that kind of diversity to working on a continuing character?*

JERRY: I did. Yeah, I did for a while, because I'd been stuck doing those characters for so long. It gave me a chance to experiment doing different material. I think if anything, it's what I liked most, another challenge. With each story I was able to experiment with a different style or a new story-telling technique, a different approach or a character and I liked that. I began to do other things about that time. Advertising and book illustration and then I began to think of doing newspaper strips, which I did later on.

STEVE: *What was the name of your strip?*

JERRY: The first strip was called JET SCOTT. I signed a contract with the Herald Tribune Syndicate. It was a science fiction strip, of a peculiar kind. It was a collaboration with a writer who hadn't written comics before, so it was difficult in that sense. I had problems in translating the script. But he had a reputation as an experienced science writer.

JET SCOTT was science fiction that was just slightly ahead of contemporary scientific knowledge. It wasn't a futuristic strip as FLASH GORDON. We didn't want to repeat that or that genre of sci-fi. We invented an Office of Scientifact, the government agency dealing in new technology . . . that Jet would investigate and get involved with. It did very well . . . I mean it got off to a terrific start. We had almost a hundred papers to begin with, with the showcase paper the NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE. It ran daily and half a page on Sundays. And we did that for two years.

When it came time for the contract renewal we were just going over the advance. We had quite a good contract, but we had hit a plateau. And while it was a comfortable living, it was all- absorbing. I mean for those two years I didn't have a day off. I wasn't writing it, although we collaborated on the basic story ideas, which I regretted, only in the sense that that would have made it more interesting for me and, perhaps, marginally more lucrative. While I created all the characters and so forth, I had a tough time because I had to do a lot of reworking of the story breakdowns as the writer wasn't that familiar with comics idiom, although he had good ideas for the strip.

I couldn't do anything else, really, for two years, doing the complete pencil and inks. You know, most anybody who's doing an adventure strip daily and Sundays has good solid help. The strip didn't bring in enough to afford having the assistance in research that I needed. When it came to the end of that two years I had the choice to either renew the contract or drop it and the writer and I debated about it for a long time. I think he was more in favor of continuing it, as was the syndicate, because he could write a weeks' script in a morning, you know, that would take me a full week to draw.

We didn't renew the contract.

The irony of it, which I mentioned in my book on the history of the comics, was that it seemed to be the end of the renaissance of the science fiction strip at that time. But one momentous event happened just then that changed the course of history as well as the trend in comics. But that's a story we'll have to save for another time.

So ends Part Two. In Part Three, Jerry wraps up with tales of young Steve Ditko, Stan Lee, Gary Trudeau, and his ambivalence towards fame and fortune.

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"They didn't want to admit that they

COLLAZO

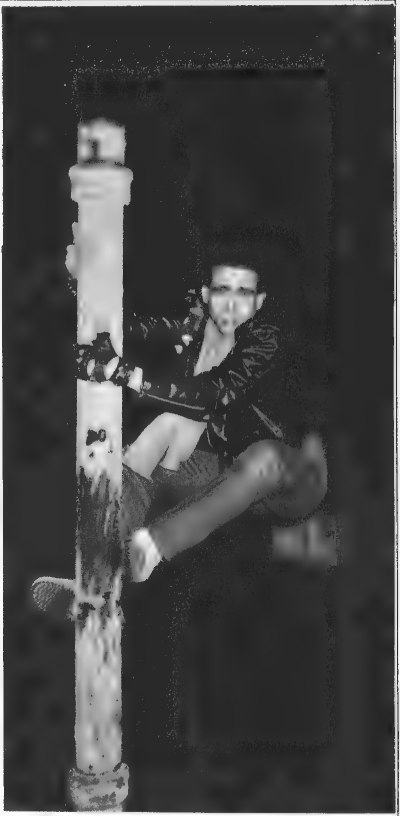

Photo: Dwight Jon Zimmerman

had made a mistake and I was still alive!"

Bold, brash, energetic, enthusiastic, Hector is the up-beat "can-do" dynamo in the Marvel Bullpen. He's also young, having come to Marvel through the high school intern program and remaining with Marvel after his recent graduation . . .

DWIGHT JON ZIMMERMAN: *Hector Collazo was declared dead.*

HECTOR COLLAZO: That's right.

DWIGHT: *What happened there?*

HECTOR: It's a *long* story. It's really pretty amusing — now it is, looking back on it. A couple of days ago, I was frantic, running around. I was sitting at home minding my own business, reading a STAR TREK novel, and my mother comes in, she had just gotten the mail, she opens this envelope, she looks through it — she just *stares* at it for a couple of seconds — looks at me and goes, "You're dead." And my first reaction was, "Oh, what'd I do now?" So I read it, and it was a letter from the United States Army stating that I had been killed in some sort of Central American thing. That was really wild, because it was an official letter, and I laughed aloud. I said, "How can I be dead, I'm still here." The only thing I can figure is my registeration form must have gotten mixed up somehow —

DWIGHT: *Your draft registration?*

HECTOR: Yeah. And they got the name out of that somehow. And then I got to thinking, and I said, "Wait a minute, there could have really been a **Hector Louis Collazo** who got killed, and I got mistaken for his guy and they sent my mother the letter." I got a real good laugh out of it. I came to work, I told everybody I was dead, I was dead for the day, and everybody was walking around me saying, "Aw, gee, I wish Hector was here, he would have laughed at this." And, in the elevator nobody would look at me or anything. *(Laughter.)* And, when I would walk into a couple of offices, like offices at Epic, everyone was sitting there and as soon as I walked in everybody goes, "Oooo, I got the chills, it's really *cold* in here all of a sudden." *(Laughter.)* Then some people talked to me and said, I don't know, something could have happened where they took my name and used it for some covert operation.

DWIGHT: *Ah.*

HECTOR: I really got worried there, and some other people came to me and said that I should take care of it, because my social security would get cut off, and all that.

DWIGHT: *Yes, if the Army considers you dead, that's just the beginning of things.*

HECTOR: So, I had to get all of my information together, go back to school, get records stating that I had been going to school for four years before I started working here, taking all of my pay-stubs that I had gotten from Marvel for the past two years, taking that with me to show them —

DWIGHT: *Did you talk to someone first to figure out how you go about proving that you are alive?*

HECTOR: My mother called — I forget which place she called, I think it was City Hall or something — and said, "Look, we got this letter . . ." And they said, "No, it's not wrong, he's dead."

DWIGHT: *That's bureaucracy.*

HECTOR: Yeah. They didn't want to admit that they had made a mistake, and I was still alive. So, I had to get all of the

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"This is not a dead person—this is *me!*"

information that said I had been alive. I had to go back to school and get my record, and they didn't want to give me my record at school. They thought I maybe wanted to take the record and doctor it up and make myself look good for a college that I was going to, so I had to explain my situation to the principal.

DWIGHT: *And I'm sure he understood immediately.*

HECTOR: Oh, yeah, right. *(Laughter.)* And then I had to go to the hospital and get records saying that I couldn't even join the Army if I wanted to because I have asthma. And then I had to go to City Hall, to the Office of Registration, to prove that I was alive, and then they gave me a hard time there. They said, "Why do you want to take this dead person's identity? What have you done?" I'm like, "This is *not* a dead person, this is *me*!" They really didn't want to help me.

DWIGHT: *How long did it take to finally convince them that they were actually dealing with a person who was not trying to take someone's identity but rather to reestablish his own?*

HECTOR: It took about a week. Well, almost a week. I got a phone call yesterday and they said everything's fine, my social security has not been cancelled, my life insurance hasn't been cancelled, I still got money.

DWIGHT: *You can still cash your checks?*

HECTOR: Yeah. I was *really* worried what was going to happen come payday when they would go, "You don't have a paycheck, you're still dead." It's still a big joke with a lot of people around here, and I think it's going to stick with me as long as I'm here.

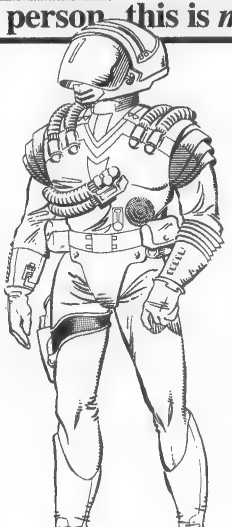
DWIGHT: *You're never going to live it down. (Laughter.)*

HECTOR: Oh, you said it, not me.

DWIGHT: *Yes, well I was hearing a bunch of "dead" jokes.*

HECTOR: *(Adopts Ed Norton voice.)* "I always knew you was a deadhead, now it's true." Oh, God, it went from being really a real funny joke to being real serious, and if I didn't take care of this some people were saying, "Oh, I heard about that, that happened to a certain person, it took him *years* to reestablish that he was alive." And I was sitting there going, "Oh, great, that's just great." I wouldn't be able to get credit. I wouldn't be able to do a lot of things.

DWIGHT: *Well, during the period when you were still enjoying the novelty of being dead while still alive, did you consider just playing out fantasies of what you could do if your —*



VITAL STATISTICS

Name: Hector Collazo
Born: 31 August 1967 — New York City
Current Residence: Manhattan
Favorite Comic Books: JUDGE DREDD; STRIKEFORCE: MORITURI (I am probably one of the few people that can pronounce the name right); and MARVEL AGE (one of the most informative magazines of our time)
Most Embarrassing Situation in Comics: Putting on the Iceman costume for the Toy Fair, and strutting around in character. That was pretty embarrassing. I got tongue-tied. I also put on the Spider-Man costume for tours of Marvel, and just suddenly pop out when they least expect it.
Favorite Movies: TERMINATOR; ROAD WARRIOR; RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK
Favorite Rock Albums: ZZ Top EL LOCO
Three Wishes if Stranded on a Desert Isle: Heather Thomas, a subscription to Marvel Comics, and two cases of Cherry Coke

"MURDER CRUISE"

A MIST-TREE TALE

BY MAX COLLINS, TERRY BEATTY AND GARY KATO

©1988 MAX COLLINS and TERRY BEATTY

"The undead walk the halls of Marvel Comics."

HECTOR: Oh, yes. Some people said I could do what **Bill Bixby** did in THE HULK on TV, just wander around the country and not have to pay taxes or anything. They said, "Oh, that's great, you could take somebody else's identity and do whatever you want. You couldn't be arrested because you don't have an identity." It was pretty wild, thinking that I could do all of these things.

DWIGHT: *Not that you really could.*

HECTOR: No, not that I really wanted to. I *wanted* to be *alive! (Laughter.)* You could be a living ghost, almost.

DWIGHT: *You didn't want to be one of the undead?*

HECTOR: Yeah, that's a joke I heard a lot. The undead walk the halls of Marvel Comics. Marvel, we don't discriminate, we hire anybody, black, white, living, dead, it doesn't matter. *(Laughter.)* It was wild.

DWIGHT: *So, have you received a formal letter acknowledging that everything is squared away?*

HECTOR: Not yet.

DWIGHT: *What has this experience of being officially brought back to life taught you?*

HECTOR: It's a wonderful life. *(Laughter.)* I don't know. Well, some people say this is a foreshadowing — don't join the Army. I was shown what a big problem it is to deal with all of these people.

DWIGHT: *Bureaucracy?*

HECTOR: Yeah. That's it.

DWIGHT: *You're pretty young for a Bullpenner.*

HECTOR: Yeah. Well, the youngest was **John Morelli.** He was around here when he was like 16, 15. This place has a real big tradition for hiring young people. So, it's nothing unusual to have somebody as young as I am in production. My case is different, because I came in from intern and I quickly moved up through production, and I'm already assistant production manager, so *that's* pretty unusual.

DWIGHT: *At the tender age of?*

HECTOR: 19.

DWIGHT: *My gosh.*

HECTOR: *Oooo,* I get excited just thinking about that. *(Laughter.)*

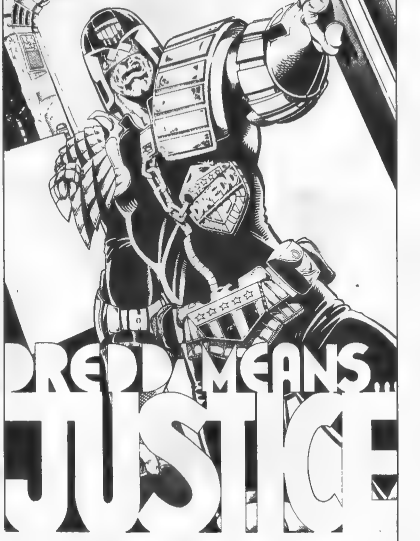
DWIGHT: *How did it happen?*

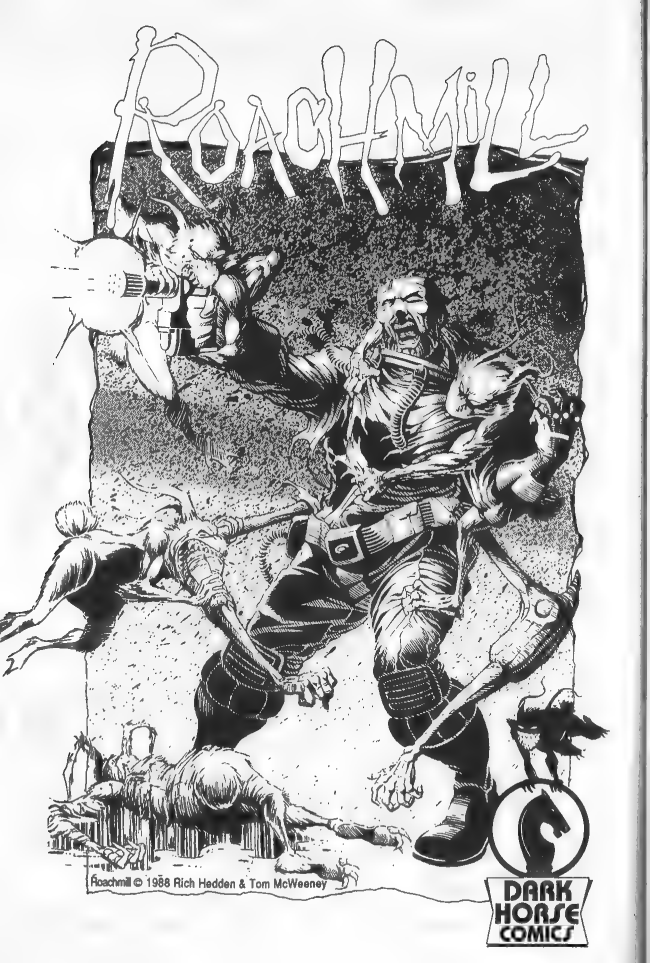
HECTOR: Well, there I was, I was a regular — I don't know if you want to call it a comic geek — but I was one of those guys who was really pro-Marvel. I was into reading comic books and underground magazines, and I was going to the High School of Art and Design. I would sit in the lunchroom with the rest of my friends going "Oh, this is great! Comic books are the best! I love it! I love it!" I heard about an internship program at Marvel, and I always wanted to set my sights on this place, and even though I took other jobs in places like hospitals and supermarkets and things, I always wanted to go to Marvel. And I heard about the internship program and I said, "Hey, this is great, they even have one for art studies." So, I figured maybe they'll have room for me at Marvel Comics, and lo and behold they did.

After school, I started working here. I'm still working here now, waiting for my raise and the official assistant production manager title, and then I plan maybe to go to Pratt. But I'm having a real good time here right now. I think I'm getting along really well with everybody. You know, I really *have* no enemies, or any major complaints against anyone, because I guess that's the kind of guy I am. I get along really well with people.

DWIGHT: *What's the thing that impressed you most about coming into comics?*

HECTOR: Well, back in school it was really funny, because I used to sit in the back of the classroom — I was one of the wise guys who *always* sat in the back and made jokes and threw paper airplanes, and stuff like that — and the teachers would always look at me and say, "Wait till you




ROACHMILL
Roachmill © 1988 Rich Hedden & Tom McWeeney
DARK HORSE COMICS

"Walt Simonson is just a normal man."

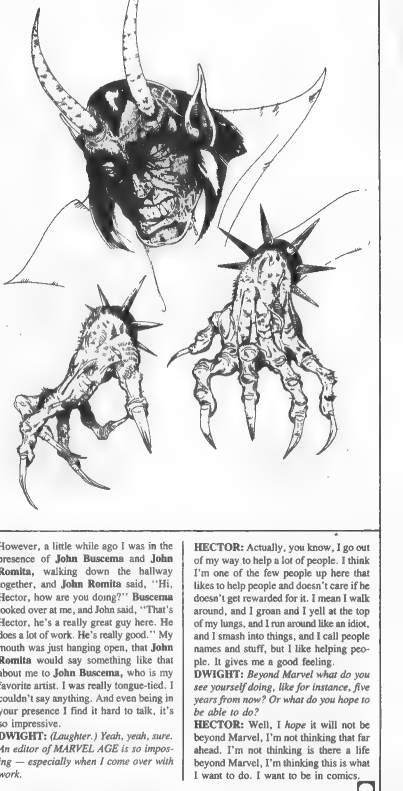
get out there to the real world." It's like, "You're going to go to an office environment. You're going to have to wear a tie. They're not going to put up with this crap. I can't wait to see you when you get out there. You're not going to make it kid." And I would go, "Oh, my God, he's probably right, I'm not going to make it! I'm going to spend the rest of my life selling cars! Help me." And then, I came to Marvel and I looked at everything, and everybody's laid back, people are running around playing football in the hallways, having these dart gun tag wars — you know, you look at everybody's table, everybody's table is so individual, and then you go to another art studio, and it's very sterile and cold. That's what impressed me about this place, you can be yourself, and I think that's what it takes to be a real good team, as good as Marvel is. Everybody's an individual, and we can all function like that — it makes it a lot more interesting place to work at. That's what really impressed me about Marvel.

DWIGHT: *Did going on the inside and discovering all the secrets of what's coming in, not only the next issue, but the issue after and after that even, did that kind of ruin following a series for you?*

HECTOR: You know, you're right, in a way it kind of killed comics for me. The magic. I used to sit there and I'd read my comics month after month, every month, like clockwork. I would go pick them up and I would say, "This is great, I can imagine **John Byrne** was just working on this issue of THE FANTASTIC FOUR." I didn't know that he was drawing it four months in advance. That kind of killed it for me, because I was able to talk to my friends before about comic books, and it's kind of hard to talk to them and not let anything slip out in casual conversation, because they are really big comic-book readers and they follow it a real lot.

DWIGHT: *When you first came to the Bullpen, meeting various creators and all, did you find yourself getting tongue-tied when you're seeing some of the big names coming waltzing through there?*

HECTOR: Oh, I can tell you stories. I guess I was just like any other tour person that was coming through, but **John Bryne** seemed to have an ego the day that I met him. He was strutting around sort of saying, "I'm **John Bryne**, nobody else matters." That kind of turned me off to him, so when I talked to John it was just kind of like a hello and a good-bye thing. **Walt Simonson** is just a normal man, you know. He walks around, he says hello to everyone. He's really easy to talk to, so I didn't get tongue-tied with him.



However, a little while ago I was in the presence of **John Buscema** and **John Romita**, walking down the hallway together, and **John Romita** said, "Hi, Hector, how are you doing?" **Buscema** looked over at me, and John said, "That's Hector, he's a really great guy here. He does a lot of work. He's really good." My mouth was just hanging open, that **John Romita** would say something like that about me to **John Buscema**, who is my favorite artist. I was really tongue-tied. I couldn't say anything. And even being in your presence I find it hard to talk, it's so impressive.

DWIGHT: *(Laughter.) Yeah, yeah, sure. An editor of MARVEL AGE is so imposing — especially when I come over with work.*

HECTOR: Actually, you know, I go out of my way to help a lot of people. I think I'm one of the few people up here that likes to help people and doesn't care if he doesn't get rewarded for it. I mean I walk around, and I groan and I yell at the top of my lungs, and I run around like an idiot, and I smash into things, and I call people names and stuff, but I like helping people. It gives me a good feeling.

DWIGHT: *Beyond Marvel what do you see yourself doing, like for instance, five years from now? Or what do you hope to be able to do?*

HECTOR: Well, I *hope* it will not be beyond Marvel, I'm not thinking that far ahead. I'm not thinking is there a life beyond Marvel, I'm thinking this is what I want to do. I want to be in comics.

Welcome to the Fantagraphics MENAGERIE

ADVENTURES OF CAPT. JACK

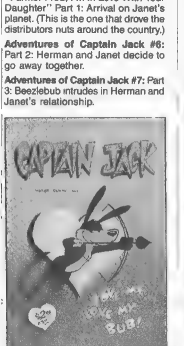
Adventures of Captain Jack #3: Part 2 of "Sat. Night": Herman and Beezlebub visit the netherworld.

Adventures of Captain Jack #4: Maniacal astronauts and a batty back-up strip.

Adventures of Captain Jack #5: "Farmer Fred, I'm In Love With Your Daughter" Part 1: Arrival on Janet's planet. (This is the one that drove the distributors nuts around the country.)

Adventures of Captain Jack #6: Part 2: Herman and Janet decide to go away together.

Adventures of Captain Jack #7: Part 3: Beezlebub intrudes in Herman and Janet's relationship.



Adventures of Captain Jack #8: A daring escape, the Captain in drag, and more.

Adventures of Captain Jack #9: Pool hustling with Saturated Fats, and the conclusion of the storyline!

Adventures of Captain Jack #10: Jack and the crew return to Detroit and discover lots of unpaid bills.

CRITTERS

Critters #4: *Gnuff* and *Birthright* continue, *Lionheart* premieres, and the first Ken Macklin cover painting!

Critters #5: *Birthright* continues, the first *Gnuff* novel concludes (with a cover), plus Stan Sakai's *Nilson Groundthumper*!

Critters #6: *Usagi Yojimbo* tale with cover, *Birthright* concludes, and the first *Firecracker Jack* by Mark Armstrong!

Critters #8: *Jack Bunny* by cover artist Mark Armstrong, Templeton Kelly tribute, and *Lionheart* begins.

Critters #9: Hallowe'en issue with Gnuff behind a mask, Lionheart's nightmare, and Dog Boy.

Critters #10: *Usagi Yojimbo* cover/story, plus *Gnuff* and *Lionheart*.

Critters #12: *Birthright* returns, plus Waller/Worley, and Sam Kieth!

Critters #13: *Gnuff* cover, plus *Birthright* and Mark Armstrong.

Critters #14: *Usagi Yojimbo* story and cover, plus *Birthright* and *Gnuff*.

Critters #15: *Blue Beagle* and *Fission Chicken*, and *Birthright* races on!

Critters #16: *Gnuff* ends, another *Nilson Groundthumper* story by Sakai, and *Birthright*!

Critters #17: *Lionheart* returns, plus the conclusion of *Birthright*.

Critters #18: *Leggo Lamb* by Jim Engel premieres. Also, the conclusion to *Lionheart*, and *Blue Beagle*.

Critters #19: *Gnuff* returns, plus *Sam and Max*, *Freelance Police*, *Lizards*, and *Fission Chicken*

Critters #20: *SpeakingStone* by Waller/Worley, *Gnuff* and *Fission Chicken*.

Critters #21: More *Gnuff*, *Lizards*, *Fission Chicken*—32 pages worth—plus a Sam Kieth cover!

Critters #22: *Watchmen* cover parody for *Blue Beagle* story, plus *Gnuff*, *Fission Chicken*, and *Ambrose*.

Critters #23: Christmas issue with *Gnuff*, *Lizards*, *Fission Chicken*, *Lionheart*, as well as strips by Marc Schirmeister, Sam Kieth, Tim Fuller, Mike Kazaleh, Bob Conway, Ty Templeton and Anthony Van Bruggen —plus a flexidisc with songs performed by Templeton & Alan Moore!

Critters #24: *Gnuff* continues, plus *Lizards* and *Fission Chicken*.

Critters #25: The return of *Lionheart*, plus *Gnuff* and *Angst*.

Critters #26: *Angst* cover by Van Horn, plus *Gnuff* and *Lionheart*.

Critters #27: Stan Sakai cover and Nilson Groundthumper story, plus *Lionheart* and *Fission Chicken*.

Critters #28: *Blue Beagle* in a Miami Vice/Coke parody, plus *Lionheart* and *Fission Chicken*.

Critters #29: The climax to *Lionheart*, plus *Lizards* and *Fission Chicken*, and a one-page *Captain Jack*.

Critters #30: Mark Martin cover and story, plus *Angst*, and *Gnuff* returns in the "The Big Sneeze."

Critters Special #1—Nilson Groundthumper and Hermy: Both the *Albedo* stories, plus a new 10-page strip!

DOG BOY

Dog Boy #1: Journey off into surreal experiences with "Werewolf Bikers" and more!

Dog Boy #2: Sir Isaac Newton guest stars as reality unravels.

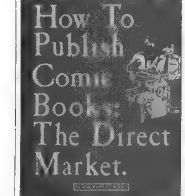
Dog Boy #3: Dog Boy shows how to publish your own comic book.

Dog Boy #4: Dog Boy goes to Hell, plus Dog Girl invades the White House. Guest starring Reagan!

Dog Boy #5: An experiment misfires, and Dog Boy and Benb combine to form . . . Dogb! Oh no!

Dog Boy #6: "Drinkin' Man's Blues, with a striking painted cover.

Dog Boy #7: Jazzy issue exploring Dog Boy's multiple personalities!



Dog Boy #8: Alfred Knoot starts a new newspaper, Dog Girl goes graffiti-crazy, and more!

Dog Boy #9: Dancing with the cats, Dog Girl in jail, Benb goes crazy!

Dog Boy #10: The epic conclusion of the saga! Breathtaking lunacy!

HUGO

Hugo #1: Milton (*Midnite*) Knight's feline "Meets the Baron."

Hugo #2: Hugo becomes a cartoonist and gets into deep trouble.

Hugo #3: Hugo is abducted by mermaids and fights sharks.

MYRON MOOSE

Myron Moose Funnies #1: Lots of goofy snot jokes, plus parodies of Dr. Seuss and Uncle Wriggly books.

Myron Moose Funnies #2: Parodies Batman, Mickey Mouse, Spirit, more.

Myron Moose Funnies #3: "Comic Book Fans," and more silly snot.

USAGI YOJIMBO

Usagi Yojimbo #1 *(2nd printing)*: Usagi journeys tells how he became a samurai. Plus: Dennis Fujitake!

Usagi Yojimbo #2: Usagi goes into training and has his first duel.

Usagi Yojimbo #3: The continuation of "Samurai," and a "Croakers" strip by Don Dougherty.

Usagi Yojimbo #4: The conclusion to Usagi's origin, and the first half of a penguin strip by Gary Kato.

Usagi Yojimbo #5: A one-issue tale of silk, treachery, and greed, and the end of the penguin tale by Kato.

Usagi Yojimbo #6: Usagi vs. a water elemental, plus two more Usagi tales!

Usagi Yojimbo #7: Usagi makes a friend, plus Phil Yeh!

Usagi Yojimbo #8: A difficult assignment for Usagi, plus Tom Luth's "Rockhoppers."

Usagi Yojimbo #9: The return of the Blind Swordspig, plus a tale by Todd Kurosawa.

Usagi Yojimbo #10: "Blade of the Gods," plus a Usagi/Leonardo the T-M-N-Turtle tale by Peter Laird!

BOOKS, MAGAZINES, AND OTHER STUFF

Usagi Yojimbo Book One: Every *Usagi Yojimbo* story before *Usagi #1* collected in one handy 160-page volume, with a new Stan Sakai cover.

Amazing Heroes #9: Behind the scenes of DC's *Captain Carrot* comic with Scott Shaw! and Roy Thomas. Plus a funny-animal pictorial.

Amazing Heroes #42: Funny-animal issue with Joshua Quagmire cover and interview. Plus: Arn Saba on Neil the Horse and Dave Sim on Cerebus!

Amazing Heroes #111: Ty Templeton (of *Critters*) interviewed. It's funny.

Amazing Heroes #129: Interviews with Steven A. Gallacci and Freddy Milton, "Why I Draw Funny Animals" by various, the new *Mighty Mouse* show, plus more!

The Comics Journal #73: Carl Barks featured, with long retrospective.

The Comics Journal #82-83: Mammoth interview with Dave (*Cerebus the Aardvark*) Sim.

The Comics Journal #99: Big interview with Arn (*Neil the Horse*) Saba.

The Comics Journal #120: Disney issue; interviews with Floyd Gottfredson, Ward Kimball, and Art Babbitt.

Anything Goes! #3: Featuring a full-color Captain Jack story by Mike Kazaleh, Cerebus vignette by Dave Sim, and Cerebus cover by Neal Adams.

Anything Goes! #6: Cover painting by Stan Sakai of Usagi Yojimbo, worth the cover price.

NEMO #21: 28 pages of Jack Kent's classic *King Aroo* strip—a treat for classic funny-animal lovers!

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"I started Chaosium Games in my house."

GREG STAFFORD

I've come to know Greg Stafford better than most of the role-playing game publishers out there. After all, he does live the in the San Francisco Bay area, near me. His voice is quite nice to listen to, and, for a guy who makes a living off fun and games, I think you'll find he has some pretty sharp insights into a more serious side of fooling around.

MARK BORAX: *How long have you been with Chaosium?*

GREG STAFFORD: Twelve years. We started off publishing fanzines. I went into professional publishing with my first game, WHITE BEAR & RED MOON, 12 years ago.

MARK: *What was the name of the fanzine?*

GREG: WYRD. One or two people out there might remember it. *(Laughter.)*

MARK: *How did you make the leap from publishing a fanzine to gaming?*

GREG: Originally — like all fanzine publishers — I was a frustrated writer. I hit upon the idea of writing a do-it-yourself novel, and that became my first game. It was an epic fantasy board game in which I supplied the characters and settings, and the plot came when you played the game. Each time it was different. It was released the same year as DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, and as soon as I learned about role-playing games I could see that role-playing was *much* closer to what I was aiming for, as far as participating in the genre. We published our first role-playing game, which was RUNEQUEST, about two years after WHITE BEAR & RED MOON came out.

MARK: *And RUNEQUEST was successful?*

GREG: RUNEQUEST was very successful. We have since licensed it to the Avalon Hill Game Company. We did a new edition for them. We are coming out with a whole new line of supplements for it as well.

MARK: *Did you get into gaming from your interest in fantasy, rather than in comics, or both?*

GREG: Well, I originally got into gaming in high school. During my freshman year I moved to Illinois. The first summer there I had two friends. One was a juvenile delinquent and one was a wargamer, so I spent half my time playing war games. So I was familiar with the format — of it being an unfinished story — and I just wanted to make the unfinished do-it-yourself novel.

MARK: *Right around '74 or so, when you were just ready to get into it, was pretty remarkable timing. It seemed to be just about the right time.*

GREG: The right time and the right place. So much of this stuff *is* being at the right place at the right time, and recognizing the opportunity. I was very fortunate at that time.

MARK: *Did you start Chaosium?*

"I had no training, no experience."

GREG: Yes. I started it in my house. At the time there were three-and-one-half of us living in a three-room apartment in the ghetto in Oakland, and our neighbors from Chicago said, "Can we stay with you for two days while we find a place to live?" and they lived with us for four months with their two children. Everything was in chaos, and since we were close to the Coliseum I thought Chaosium was an appropriate name. *(Laughter.)*

MARK: *Do you get letters from people? Is being a game manufacturer similar to publishing a comic book in that your readership wants to respond to what you're doing?*

GREG: In a way, yes. What you want to understand is that people in gaming are much more active than people in comics. In the role playing games you are an active participant as opposed to a passive recipient, and so the types of letters we get are not so much the letter columns in comic books, which are often asking questions and making suggestions. Many of the letters that we get are full-blown submissions, entire stories. People don't ask questions, they *tell* us what they want and what we *should* be doing.

MARK: *Do you find ways of incorporating that into what you are doing?*

GREG: Always. We feel that the participation of our fans is critical. They *know* what they want, and we try to give them what they want.

MARK: *And it's great because it's a way for adult, grown-up people to indulge in exciting fantasies.*

GREG: Yes, I agree. What's unique and very interesting about the role-playing games is that they are participatory. You have to wonder a little bit about why people are so interested in participating in the Lovecraft Universe.

MARK: *Because it's so dark?*

GREG: Correct. CALL OF CTHULHU has provoked the largest number of submissions of scenarios of any game we've ever published. In many ways it is an outlet for many people who have the creative energy to participate; to focus, to make something, to get it into print. It's not just a book that somebody's going to read, but a game that somebody's going to play and have their hair stand on end while they play it.

MARK: *A lot of the entertainment in modern society comes so passively that they sort of fill up with this TV stuff and then they want to find a release, want to be able to give back.*

GREG: Role-playing games are everything that television is not. Television is totally passive. You've got to accept what they give you — and it's really not very exciting except for maybe the 10 seconds of violence during the show. Participation is critical in role-playing games. Every player in the game is the main character in that game. That's very exciting.

MARK: *Also, I would imagine a lot of people might sit at home and read Lovecraft or comics — and then the game gives these people a place to actually interact.*

GREG: That's right. That's one of the main differences in role-playing games as opposed to movies or literature or comic books. Literature and comics and movies are passive experiences. Role-playing games are also a solitary experience, but they're also a social occasions. I feel it's just as important to get in there and chat with your friends once a week as it is to get in there and kill dragons.

MARK: *What do you do at Chaosium now?*

GREG: Personally, I run the day-to-day business, and I'm also chief of design in determining the type of product and the general format of the products that we have.

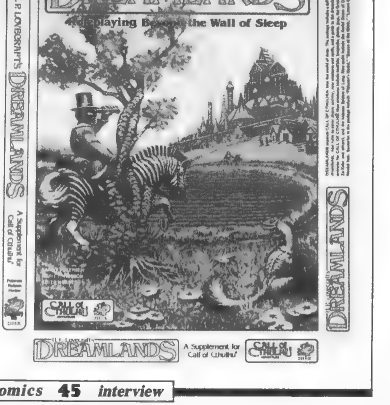
MARK: *Did you learn all of that from scratch 12 years ago, going from a fanzine to learning how to design games?*

GREG: Yes. I used to design games. I don't have any time now. Now I run a company instead of running a game. But yes, I had no training, no experience. In fact, I had no inclination to run a company at all until I was faced with the possibility.

MARK: *Do you miss being on that creative end of it rather than making all of the business moves?*

GREG: Yes. Yeah. In fact, lately I've begun to do a little bit more writing. I took a week off last month to be a creative writer, and it was so much fun — it was like flying. I felt so liberated and free again — to be able to do what I wanted to do and just be creative — that it's really re-

"Dreamlands," based on H.P. Lovecraft's "Cthulu" mythos, includes the rare spell known as "The Woeful Itch!"



"I felt so liberated and free again."

enflamed my desire to become a creative man.

MARK: *What did you write?*

GREG: At that time I was writing a fantasy encyclopedia for our FANTASY WORLD published through RUNEQUEST, which is . . . the world is called Glorantha. We've been publishing material on it in a sort of unprepared manner, a sporadic manner, and we're now organizing all of the data and making it into an encyclopedia for publication.

MARK: *How many people does Chaosium employ?*

GREG: Right now we have six employees

MARK: *How does that compare to TSR, which does DUNGEONS & DRAGONS?*

GREG: Oh, we're miniscule. TSR was the first in the line; it got the lion's share. Compared to TSR, we are a small publisher.

MARK: *But obviously there's enough of a market to be divided in different directions.*

GREG: Yes. We have chosen to specialize in products that are based on fantasy and science fiction works in literature and comics, so we have ELFQUEST; STORMBRINGER; HAWKMOON; KING ARTHUR PENDRAGON; THIEVES' WORLD; and SUPERWORLD.

MARK: *How do the comics companies react to you as a company? How do you make overtures to licensing a product?*

GREG: Comics companies have recently become aware of the fact that the role-playing-game audience is the same as their audiences. We have the ELFQUEST role-playing game out, which was probably the first successful comics-based, role-playing game. In general, the comic-book companies are very much interested in the field. They would like to have more people *participating* in their comics via role-playing games, and we often entertain overtures from them for new games. We're always interested in finding out *from* comic-book readers what they'd most like to see in a game, what kind of game they would like to see done. If anyone has suggestions then I would certainly entertain their letters.

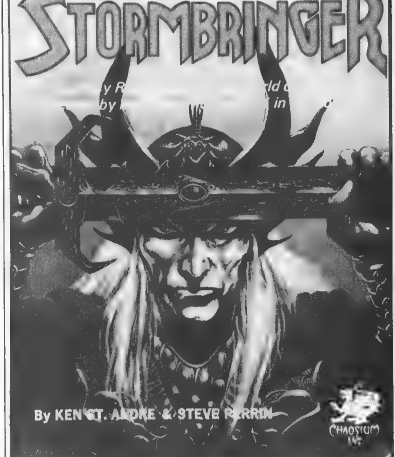
MARK: *You might as well give your address.*

GREG: Our address is P.O. Box 6302, Albany, CA 94706.

MARK: *You realize that you may get a lot more stuff than you want.*

GREG: That's okay.

MARK: *Do you have staff artists who implement your designs into the finished product?*



GREG: We have no artists on staff. Our staff consists entirely of editorial and production personnel. The graphics are important, and we have no staff artists. We're always looking for new folks. In many respects we are a starting ground for artists. We can afford to pay people professional or near professional rates. I would suggest any artist who is interested in having work published should send us a portfolio.

I'm trying to think of the names of some artists who have begun with us and gone on to bigger and better things. Vickl Poyser is mainly doing book covers right now.

I can't pull any other names out of the hat *off-hand*, but we do use art from comic artists. **Frank Brunner** did our STORMBRINGER line covers, and we did his portfolio on the interiors as well. That comes most immediately to mind. Of course, **Wendy Pini** in ELFQUEST, but we hardly started her. *(Laughter.)* Or **Brunner,** for that matter.

MARK: *What about writers? Who writes the material?*

GREG: We have staff writers and we also accept free-lance. About 50% of our published material is free-lance material. Anyone can write to us for a submission guideline. In general we are looking for a final product. We don't like to answer letters that are asking ideas. Ideas are cheap and easy. We want to see a finished product, and we will send a submission guideline to anyone who asks.

MARK: *How has the business changed since you've been in it?*

GREG: The business, since I have been in it, has changed from being a field where the companies were run by artist-entrepreneurs. Everybody who came up with a game started his own company. Those have been weeded out now. The survivors are turning more professional — and in general what we are noticing is that

"We have the ELFQUEST role-playing game."

our market is moving from the hobby field towards comics and books. This is, to me, a mark of sophistication. People are looking for something to do, something that is interesting and comparable to reading, as opposed to macrame. We publish the **H. P. Lovecraft** game called CALL OF CTHULHU. It and ELFQUEST are our best sellers. ELFQUEST does better with the comic fans. CALL OF CTHULHU does better with other fans and is probably our most popular game.

Let me tell you why I think CALL OF CTHULHU is popular. CALL OF CTHULHU is based on the works of **H. P. Lovecraft,** who was a writer in the 1920s. The stories written by him and his proteges are basically about ordinary people, living in the world of the '20s, who discover interdimensional alien horrors and monstrosities that are trying to take over the world and destroy mankind. The object in the game, as in the stories, is to try to stop these things from destroying the world.

I think that CALL OF CTHULHU is popular today *because* it's optimistic in its outlook. What I mean by that is the world that is takes place in is not at all dissimilar to our world. That is to say people live in a world which is on the brink of imminent doom by things that seem to be of proportions *far* beyond any human control. Yet in the game, by playing the game, you can do it. You can save the world. One person may be all that stops it from being destroyed. I think that's important for us today, just to even briefly experience the fact that we can make a difference. It's an empowering experience. That's what the game allows you to do.

MARK: *CALL OF CTHULHU is answering the same need that Jerry Robinson and Dick Sprang and Siegel and Shuster answered when they created characters to strike back against Nazi oppression.*

GREG: Exactly. These comic book characters, just like role-playing characters, are manifestations of our subconscious, and by bringing our subconscious to the forefront where we can examine it, we have the opportunity to learn from ourselves about ourselves.

MARK: *Not to mention that they're fun.*

GREG: That's right. It's enjoyable to boot. You can't beat it.

MARK: *It would be interesting if we could turn the clock back to Providence, R.I., and tell H. P. Lovecraft that one day his material would be adapted into games played by people all over the country.*

GREG: That's right. I doubt that he would believe it, but he'd probably put it into a story. *(Laughter.)*

MARK: *Right, I can see it all now, "The Game Players On the Haunted Cliff . . .*

GREG: . . .Going Mad," just like the Christian right tells us we're doing. *(Laughter.)*

MARK: *How are they telling you that?*

GREG: There's a lot of movement among the Christian right . . . well, for a while they were very much focused on role-playing games as being tools of Satan. The Christian right has stated that creativity and free thinking are bad. Since these games foster that, they directed their attacks for a long time against the role-playing field. They claimed that it was responsible for murder, suicide, and in general the moral decline of the United States — which is, of course, entirely false.

MARK: *I thought you were going to say it was all true.* (Laughter.) *At least then, you know, they'd have a case.*

GREG: That's right.

MARK: *They ought to look at the fact that you help teach people how to interact socially rather than become individual miscreants.*

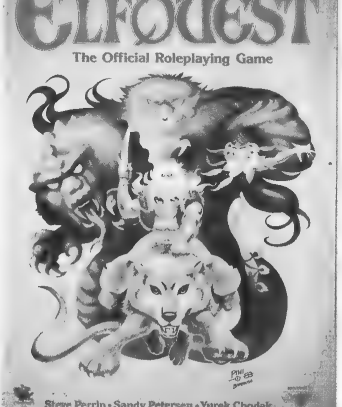
GREG: Exactly. *(Laughter.)* Of course they probably feel we're creating a society of miscreants. *(Laughter.)*

MARK: *We should only be so lucky to have that kind of society.* (Laughter.) *Also, I think they gave you a good title there: THE TOOL OF SATAN. That could be your next game.*

GREG: I think I'll consider that. *(Laughter.)* It would certainly get us more than our share of free promotion.

MARK: *What's on the horizon for Chaosium? What kind of things do you have in store?*

GREG: Well, we're going to continue our growth. We're going to continue to support the lines of games that we do have. We're probably going to start publishing some new board games, which we have not done for five years. For the next year we have several opportunities. I'm not exactly sure which trail we're going to follow. One of them that looks most likely is that we're going to be doing a lot of sort of CTHULHU promotion outside of the games themselves. If our plans work then we will probably come out with, for



"I think that role-playing games may

KING ARTHUR
PENDRAGON
Chivalric Roleplaying in Arthur's Britain

instance, a freshman guide to Miskatonic University with course schedules and —

MARK: *THE NECRONOMICON?*

GREG: Well, there are two editions of THE NECRONOMICON out now, neither of which are really satisfactory. Maybe another one of those, sure. And CTHULHU tie tacks. How about a Miskatonic University bowling jacket? *(Laughter.)*

MARK: *A fraternity pledge pin.*

GREG: Swimsuits for the Deep Ones. *(Laughter.)* We don't exactly know what we'll be doing. More than likely we plan to be selling, for instance, diplomas from Miskatonic University, so that you can put it on your wall next to your doctorate.

MARK: *That's great. I would wager that you were probably interested in H. P. Lovecraft before you started doing Lovecraft games.*

GREG: Well, not me personally. **Sandy Petersen,** who is our CTHULHU expert, was. He's been in love with the mythos since he was 12 years old — which is probably more than half his life — and he *is* an expert. This man lives and breathes it.

MARK: *Do you think one day Chaosium will be 10 times the size it is now, or would you rather go in some other direction with what you're doing?*

GREG: I think that we will certainly continue to grow — I'm not sure we'll be 10 times our size. I would like that. In many respects we have a choice to make, of being a big fish in a small pond or a small fish in a big pond. We'd much rather cater to the specialists because we *are* specialists. We feel that we can do that best, and we will certainly continue to do that.

MARK: *Where is the future of role-playing?*

GREG: I think role-playing is going to continue to expand in a lot of ways that even us in the field are unaware of. When DUNGEONS & DRAGONS began 12 years ago no one knew what it was, no one *knew* that it would be popular. No one really recognized the *need* that game fulfills. I think that there are other related fields that role-playing will move into, specifically the educational field. American education leaves a lot to be desired, and role-playing games are one of the ways to teach children without them knowing they're being taught. We're making overtures into the educational field, starting to move in that direction. At the moment it's mostly an entertainment industry, and it will certainly continue to grow as entertainment, and I think that it will do some things that we don't know yet.

MARK: *If you move into the educational system, are we talking specifically, like, between 12-18 year old?*

GREG: That's probably where we would start. You don't need games for children. Children play games without rules. There was a MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE role-playing game that was released, intended for 8- to 12-year-olds. *They* don't need rules to play by.

MARK: *Everything is a game.*

GREG: Everything. They play cops and robbers. Us sophisticated adults are much too good for that. We have to have a 100-page book to tell us how to play cops and robbers.

MARK: *So you would be aiming to the junior high school and the high school age group?*

GREG: Probably so, and maybe some grammer schools. I've been working with a man who is in the educational and computer field, **Bob Albrecht,** and he wants to start it in the second grade. He has programs that he teaches in second grade. We're moving that way.

MARK: *Why do you think role-playing games are so important to so many people?*

GREG: That's a tough one. Every generation has a game that in some way fills its needs and suits the personality of the times. MONOPOLY is the one for the last generation. It became popular in a time when everybody was poor. Everybody was looking to be a landowner. Everybody wanted to be a big fat capitalist. Times have changed, and MONOPOLY is not the game of our generation. Role-playing games are. Role-playing is much more expansive, much more conscious-expanding and creates the opportunities of a future, not something of the past.

One of the things that I am interested in, in a number of ways — and it rolls over into my interest in promoting role-playing games — is the issue of self-empowerment, and people coming to realize who they are and what they can do. I work on this issue through different methods. I've worked with people in the shamanic training, through self-empowerment programs, and I feel that this type of training is important. Role-playing fulfill the same need.

MARK: *How do you work in shamanic training?*

GREG: I belong to a group which teaches people about "visionquesting" and about how to deal with their own problems using shamanic methods, of talking to the spirits and of talking to whatever is bothering them. Basically it's an alternative religious method which is personal as opposed to institutional.

MARK: *Sounds fascinating.*

GREG: If you like sitting in a desert for four days with no food, it is fascinating. *(Laughter.)*

MARK: *It seems like you're fulfilling a real cross-section of purposes with role-*

The Game of Quest, Romance, & Adventure

fulfill some spiritual need in America."

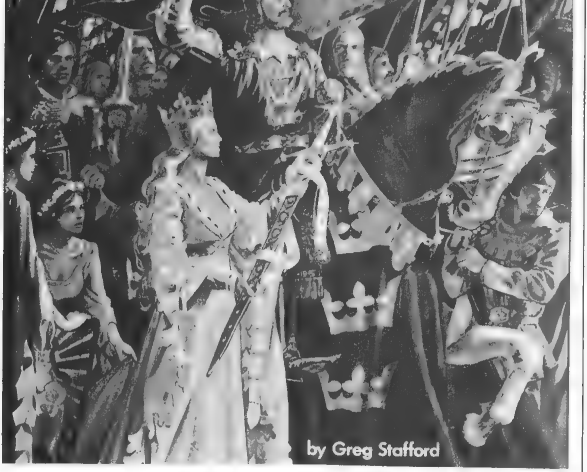
playing games. The possibilities seem limitless.

GREG: I think so. What we want to point out is that role-playing games are intellectual. They appeal to your mind. You have to think, and being clever helps. It's also emotional. When you set up a surrogate self to play in a game, the individual takes on its own personality. It's like a mask that you wear. You become very attached to these characters, and there is *truly* emotional fulfillment. It may be a surrogate experience, but it's still real.

I think in some sense that role-playing games may even fulfill some spiritual need in America. People today are often fearful or bored because they feel powerless. In a role-playing game, you set up the game, and when you play in it you are not powerless. You experience a role where you are important. Just doing this even for pretend is important because if you sit around long enough and pretend that you are important, soon you will recognize that you are in fact important; that you are not an impersonal, meaningless individual in the world; that you can get out there, even in America in the '80s, and exercise your personal power and do something important. I *know* that role-playing games have fulfilled this for many people.

MARK: *So, you can almost construe the function of role-playing games in modern society as rites of passage which in previous cultures were supplied by a shaman or a grandfather figure. We don't have that built into our culture in America, and in a sense role-playing games might help provide some of those same functions?*

GREG: Without a doubt. The basis of the role-playing game is generally to go on a quest or an adventure, and a quest or adventure is only important if you learn something significant from it. If Frodo had gotten the ring and thrown it in the well and the volcano had gone back and just been an ordinary hobbit, it would have been a flat story. In a role-playing game when presented with a quest or a problem, and it's solved, I believe that it does fulfill the same sort of spiritual experience. Going out on a hill and spending your four or five days out there "visionquesting" is a very powerful experience, and it is *repeated* in a smaller manner by going out on a quest in a role-playing game.



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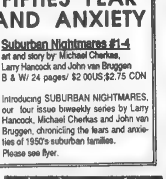
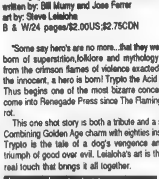
This one shot story is both a tribute and a spoof Combining Golden Age charm with eighties insanity, Trypto is the tale of a dog's vengence and the triumph of good over evil. Leialoha's art is the surreal touch that brings it all together.





JAIME on Renegade Romance!

Renegade Romance #2
art and stories by various artists (see below)
cover by: Jaime Hernandez
B & W/64 pages/$3.50US,$5.00CDN

This is our second annual collection of romance stories. The last one had plenty of re-orders so be sure to order accordingly as our cover by Jaime Hernandez is bound to increase sales potential. Included this issue are: the conclusion to Trina Robbins "Red Love;" "Wedding Day" by Bob Rozakis and Steven DeStefano; English cartoonist David Hines's hilarious 8 page story about romance stories in the eighties; "Daydreams" by Jackie Estrada and Barb(Vickie Valentine) Rausch; "Forever Is A Long,Long Time" by Steve Leialoha and Deni Loubert; a new eight page story from Ch...ün; and "Schoolgirl" by newcomer Laurence P. Kamp. The back cover is by Lee(Wimmens Comix)Binswanger

JULY
AT A GLANCE

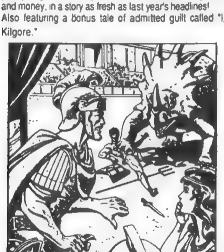
The Cases of Sherlock Holmes #14	Kilgore #5
Neil the Horse #14	Ms Tree #49
Trypto the Acid Dog	Renegade Romance #2
Suburban Nightmares #1	Suburban Nightmares #3
Suburban Nightmares #2	Suburban Nightmares #4

The Cases of Sherlock Holmes #14
written by: Arthur Conan Doyle
cover and art by: Dan Day
B & W/32 pages/
$2.00US; $2.75CDN

"The Adventure of the Naval Treaty" part two
In this conclusion to the story, we find that if Sherlock Holmes fails to solve the mystery behind "The Adventure of the Naval Treaty," then the British Empire is doomed!

Kilgore #5
art and story by: Brian Chin
B & W/32 pages/$2.00US;$2.75 CDN

How original can you get? An Army guy fighting dinosaurs in a forgotten jungle? When Col. Kilgore's in charge, that's plenty original as he spouts off about dinosaurs, politics, and money, in a story as fresh as last year's headlines!
Also featuring a bonus tale of admitted guilt called "I, Kilgore."



Ms. Tree #49
story by: Max Collins
art by: Terry Beatty and Gary Kato
2-color/32 pages/$2.00US;$2.75CDN

"The Fallen Tree" - part one
This is the first part of a two-issue "death of Ms. Tree" story. A mortal wound sends Ms. Tree reeling into a surreal nightmare world where those she has killed await her! The second part of this story will be #50 (solicited last month) with flexi-disc, so be sure you order plenty for your customers.This book will be getting new customers with the paperback versions coming out in June, so be sure you have enough.

NEIL RETURNS!

Neil the Horse #14
written and drawn by: Arn Saba
cover with assistance from: David Roman
B & W/ 64 pages/ $3.00US, $4.50 in Canada

During the past year and a half, Arn Saba has been busy working on a network Neil the Horse movie for Saturday morning. Now he has finally taken a breather to share with us some older earlier versions of Neil, including the very first Neil story from 1975. This special 64 page issue has lots of story, art, music, and again one of the those gorgeous painted cover that had Neil nominated for best cover two issues ago.

LIVING WEAPONS!

It had to happen! THE X-MEN ON TV!

But will action animation ever be the same -- can it survive the anti-social attitudes of Wolverine? And more to the point -- can Wolverine and the other X-Men survive the world of television animation? (For a start, imagine Logan with an Australian accent!)

Some of the top artists in comics came together - with the greatest respect for the X-Men--so we may be in for a pleasant surprise. Produced by Marvel, supervised by Stan (the Man) Lee, and featuring such artistic talents as Russ Heath, Will Meugniot and Rick Hoberg, X-MEN: THE LIVING WEAPONS is a show to watch!

Which mutants made the line-up? Cyclops. Nightcrawler. Colossus. Wolverine. Shadowcat. Iceman. Angel. The Beast. And featuring Professor X as The Beaver.

Want to know more about the shape of things to come? THIS ISSUE IS FOR YOU!

Naturally, that's not all. Issue #58, of COMICS INTERVIEW also features far-ranging interviews with your favorite writers and artists in comics, plus a fair share of surprising folks in ALL walks of comics life.

You just won't find the kind of variety and information available in COMICS INTERVIEW in any other publication about the comics field!

#58 • **$3.50**

COMICS INTERVIEW

X-MEN ON TV!

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DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT'S

COMICS INTERVIEW

MORE INTERVIEWS THAN ANY OTHER MAGAZINE!

LAST WORD

Comics Interview 234 Fifth Ave. Suite 30 New York, NY 10001

AMERICAN TALL TALES

Dear People,

Thank you for the LONE WOLF special. It was fascinating and, to the best of my knowledge as lead translator on the project since its inception several years prior to First Comics' participation, generally quite accurate. I would like to correct a few of the errors in **Mr. Obadiah's** amusing account, however, as, while funny, they are personally insulting and damaging to my reputation in Japan's comics industry, where American tall tales are not always recognized as such. Contrary to the account, the interpreter at the **Kojima** dinner did in fact eat the little octopi, as he has at many another Japanese meal over the past 14 years. He did not leave the room. And he did, with the help of the considerable English of the other Japanese party present, continue to interpret throughout the highly lubricated evening, even though the remarkable rapport between **Mr. Obadiah** and **Mr. Kojima** often required no words to get across.

David Lewis
Translator
2-5-2. Hatsudai
Shibuya-ku, Tokyo
Japan

KUDOS FROM JAPAN

Dear folks,

Enjoyed, thoroughly, the LONE WOLF SPECIAL #52. I plan to write First Comics and let them know how my Japanese secretary enjoys the book. Thanks a lot.

David Schindler
APTS 33 #309
4-24-58 Takanawa
Minato-ku, Tokyo
JAPAN 108

GIVE US ANY RULE WE'LL BREAK IT

Holy *#@%7!!!,

In response to **Arthur Crosby's** letter in issue #52 about censorship, I must say I am also one of the people **Falwell, Meese,** etc. are "protecting" by censoring. Most of the comics talked of being censored are direct-sales only and the titles that have nudity and excessive violence should be direct-sales only. At the comic store I go to, I had to have one of my parents buy me issues of ELEKTRA: ASSASSIN, WATCHMEN, KAMUI, and other titles because of their nudity and excessive violence. Even though I'm 14, I have seen (horrors!) violent acts and nudity in movies, television, and non-comic related magazines that I could see or buy easily without any restriction. To quote Laverne and Shirley, "Give us any rule, we'll break it." That quote sums it all up: tell kids not to read "X-rated" comics, the kids will read them, mostly just to see what they are all about.

Oy L. Wells
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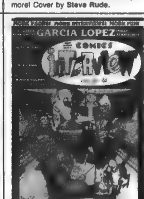

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